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THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(AUTHORISED EDITION),

FOURTH SERIES.

FOURTH SESSION OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

OF THE

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

3 EDWARD VII.

VOLUME CXX.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF MARCH
TO THE EIGHTH DAY OF APRIL, 1903.

THIRD VOLUME OF SESSION.

1903.

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Chronology of "The Parliamentary Debates."

THE PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY contains all that can be collected of the Legislative History of this country from the Conquest to the close of the XVIIIth Century (1803), 36 vols. The chief sources whence these Debates are derived are the Constitutional History, 24 vols.; Sir Simonds D'Ewes' Journal; Debates of the Commons in 1620 and 1621; Chandler and Timberland's Debates, 22 vols.; Grey's Debates of the Commons, from 1667 to 1694, 10 vols.; Almon's Debates, 24 vols.; Debrett's Debates, 63 vols.; The Hardwicke Papers; Debates in Parliament by Dr. Johnson, &c., &c.

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VOLUME CXX.

THIRD VOLUME OF SESSION, 1903.

HOUSE OF LORDS: TUESDAY, 24TH MARCH, 1903.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

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The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill had been complied with—

Gosport, Fareham, and Cosham Tramways [H.L.]. The same was ordered to lie on the Table 1

Dewsbury, Batley, and Birstal Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Committed: The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 1

Gosport, Fareham, and Cosham Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Read 2^{a} (according to Order) 1

Hamilton, Motherwell, and Wishaw Tramways Bill [H.L.].—The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the promoters do not intend to proceed further with the Bill: Order of the Day for the Second Reading read, and discharged. Ordered, That the Bill be not further proceeded with 1

Wakefield and District Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Read 2^{a} (according to Order) 1

Old Bridewell Burying Ground Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 2

Queensland Investment and Land Mortgage Bill [H.L.]; Nantwich Urban District Council Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments 2

Western Trust Bill [H.L.].—Reported, without Amendment 2

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

Explosives (Explosion at Messrs. Nobel's Factory at Ardeer).—Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department by Captain M. B. Lloyd, His Majesty's Inspector of Explosives, on the circumstances attending an explosion of nitro-glycerine which occurred in one of the final washing-houses of the factory of Nobel's Explosives Company, Limited, at Ardeer, near Stevenston, Ayrshire, on the 7th October, 1902. Presented [by Command]; and ordered to lie on the Table 2

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SUPERANNUATION.—Treasury minute, dated 16th March, 1903, granting a retired allowance to Arthur Algernon Parkin, third-class clerk, Money Order Office, Post Office, under Section 2 of the Superannuation Act, 1887 2

NATIONAL DEBT ANNUITIES.—Account of the gross amount of all bank annuities, and any annuities for terms of years, transferred, and of all sums of money paid to the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt, and the gross amount of annuities for lives and for terms of years which have been granted for the same, and contracts for payments on death which have been made within the year ended 5th January, 1903 3

Laid before the House [pursuant to Act]; and ordered to lie on the Table.

Light Locomotives (Ireland) Bill.—Read 3ª [according to order]; with the Amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons 3

Shops (Early Closing) Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Standing Committee with further Amendments. The Report of the Amendments made in Committee of the Whole House, and by the Standing Committee, to be received on Friday next, and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 23) 3

Prevention of Corruption Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Standing Committee without further Amendment. The Report of the Amendments made in Committee of the Whole House to be received on Thursday next 3

Marine Insurance Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Standing Committee without Amendment, and to be read 3ª on Thursday next 3

THE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENCE.

The Earl of Rosebery 3

Moved to resolve, "That this House desires to express its approval of the proposed Council for National Defence, and its earnest hope that the first efforts of that Council may be directed to the adjustment of the national armaments of the naval, military, and financial conditions of the Empire."—(The Lord Rosebery (*E. Rosebery*).)

Viscount Goschen 22
The Duke of Marlborough 31
The First Lord of the Admiralty (*The Earl of Selborne*)... 37

Moved, that the debate stand adjourned till Friday next.—(*The Marquess of Ripon.*)

On Question, Adjournment agreed to.

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Lord Lamington 49

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.—Standing Order No. XXXIX. to be considered on Thursday next in order to its being suspended for that day's sitting ... 50

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Eight o'clock, to Thursday next, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: TUESDAY, 24TH MARCH, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS.—The Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of Ways and Means ... 50

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).—Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order No. 62 has been complied with, viz. :—

Baker Street and Waterloo Railway (Transfer) Bill.
Ulster and Connaught Light Railways Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time 50

PRIVATE BILLS (PETITION FOR ADDITIONAL PROVISION) STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH.—Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for additional Provision in the following Bill, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz. :—

Maidstone Gas Bill 51

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

Cheshire Lines Committee Bill.—Read a second time, and committed ... 51

Billingshurst and District Gas Bill [By Order].—Order for Second Reading read, and discharged. Bill withdrawn 51

Metropolitan District Railway (Various Powers) Bill [By Order].—Read a second time, and committed... 51

Kent Water Board Bill.—Order [16th March] for Second Reading upon Thursday read, and discharged. Bill withdrawn 51

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 2) Bill; read a second time, and committed 51

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 1).—Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Aberavon, Darlington, Hexham, Reading, Stafford, and Wallasey, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Lawson and Mr. Walter Long 51

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 2).—Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Barnes, Burton-upon-Trent, Castle Ward (Rural), Matlock-Bath-and-Scarltim-Nick, Newton Abbot, Penrith, Stroud, Worthing, and Yardley (Rural), ordered to be brought in by Mr. Grant Lawson and Mr. Walter Long 51

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No 3).—Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to the counties of Oxford and Worcester, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Grant Lawson and Mr. Walter Long.... 51

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER (HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES).—Bill to confirm a Provisional Order of the Local Government Board relating to Bolton, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Grant Lawson and Mr. Walter Long 52

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Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill.—"To confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Aberavon, Darlington, Hexham, Reading, Stafford, and Wallasey," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 115.] 52

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill.—"To confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Barnes, Burton-on-Trent, Castle Ward (Rural), Matlock-Bath-and-Scarltim-Nick, Newton Abbot, Penrith, Stroud, Worthing, and Yardley (Rural)," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 116.] 52

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill.—"To confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to the counties of Oxford and Worcester," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 117.] 52

Local Government Provisional Order (Housing of the Working Classes) Bill.—"To confirm a Provisional Order of the Local Government Board relating to Bolton," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 118.] ... 52

East Ardsley Gas Bill; Bridgwater Gas Bill; Winchester Water and Gas Bill.—Reported with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 52

PETITIONS.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Association of Municipal Corporations; and Nottinghamshire; to lie upon the Table 53

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL..—Petitions in favour: From Denny; Lanark; Kirkoswald; Riccarton; and St. Ninians; to lie upon the Table 53

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—Petition from Linlithgow, for alteration; to lie upon the Table 53

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.—Petitions against: From Merthyr Tydvil; Staines; Depwade; Handsworth; Stoke Newington; Walthamstow; Croydon; and Chipping Norton; to lie upon the Table 53

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.—Petition from Clitheroe, in favour; to lie upon the Table 53

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.—Petitions against establishment: From Dunfermline; Falkirk; Oban; Cowdenbeath; to lie upon the Table 53

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (NAVY VOTES).—Return [presented 23rd March]; to be printed. [No. 87.] 53

EXPLOSIONS (NOBEL'S EXPLOSIVES FACTORY AT ARDEER, AYRSHIRE).—Copy presented, of Report by Captain M. B. Lloyd, His Majesty's Inspector of Explosives, to the right hon. the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on the circumstances attending an explosion of nitro-glycerine which occurred in one of the final washing-houses of the factory of Nobel's Explosives Company, Limited, at Ardeer, near Stevenston, Ayrshire, on the 7th October, 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 53

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SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1887.—Copy presented, of Treasury minute, dated 16th March, 1903, granting a retired allowance to Arthur Algernon Parkin, 3rd Class Clerk, Money Order Office, Post Office, under the Act [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 54

NATIONAL DEBT ANNUITIES.—Account presented, of the gross amount of all bank annuities and any annuities for terms of years transferred, and of all sums of money paid to the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt, and the gross amount of annuities for lives and for terms of years, etc., granted within the year ended 5th January, 1903 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 88.] 54

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

TREATMENT OF PRISONERS CONVICTED UNDER THE VACCINATION ACTS.—Question, Mr. Levy (Leicestershire, Loughborough); Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas... 54

NATURALISATION OF ALIENS.—Question, Sir Howard Vincent (Sheffield, Central); Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas 55

INDIA—LOANS TO NATIVE PRINCES.—Question, Sir John Leng (Dundee); Answer, Lord George Hamilton 55

DUNMORE PETTY SESSIONS COURT.—Question, Mr. Duffy (Galway, S.); Answer, Mr. Atkinson... 56

IRELAND—POLICE PENSIONERS AS POSTMASTERS.—Question, Mr. Delany (Queen's County, Ossory); Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 56

H.M.S. "WARRIOR"—COST OF ALTERATIONS.—Question, Mr. Harmsworth (Caithness-shire); Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 56

COLLIER "HAMPSTEAD"—COST OF ALTERATIONS—SPEED.—Question, Mr. Harmsworth; Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 57

SECONDARY EDUCATION IN IRELAND—DEPUTATION.—Question, Mr. Patrick O'Brien (Kilkenny); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 57

EMIGRANTS TO CANADA -GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO DISCHARGED SOLDIERS.—Question, Mr. Marshall Hall (Lancashire, Southport); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 58

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

COMMISSIONS IN KING'S AFRICAN RIFLES.—Question, Mr. Frederick Wilson (Norfolk, Mid); Answer, The Financial Secretary to the War Office (Lord Stanley, Lancashire, Westhoughton) 58

ARMY RECRUITING—CHARACTER REGULATIONS.—Question, Mr. Arthur Lee (Hampshire, Fareham); Answer, Lord Stanley 58

NEW SERVICE RIFLE.—Question, Mr. Frederick Wilson; Answer, Lord Stanley 59

OFFICERS' OUTFITS.—Question, Mr. Crombie (Kincardineshire); Answer, Lord Stanley 59

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Bloemfontein Inter-Colonial Conference.—Question, Mr. Herbert Samuel (Yorkshire, N.R., Cleveland); Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. J. Chamberlain, Birmingham, W.) 60

Italian Ice Cream Shops in Scotland.—Question, Sir John Leng (Dundee); Answer, Mr. Anstruther (St. Andrews Burghs) 60

Technical Instruction for Small Allotment Holders.—Question, Mr. Sheehan (Cork Co., Mid); Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Wyndham, Dover) 60

Balbriggan Harbour.—Question, Mr. Clancy (Dublin County, N.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 61

Irish National Schools.—Question, Mr. Boland (Kerry, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 61

Land Purchase in Limerick.—Questions, Mr. Lundon (Limerick, E.); Answers, Mr. Wyndham 61

St. Patrick's Day—Closing of Public Houses in Dublin.—Question, Mr. Thomas O'Donnell (Kerry, W.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 62

Brownhall Estate, County Mayo.—Questions, Mr. John O'Donnell (Mayo, S.); Answers, Mr. Wyndham 63

Steamship Subsidies Committee.—Question, Mr. Evelyn Cecil (Aston Manor); Answer, The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 63

Sale of Adulterated Butter Bill.—Questions, Mr. O'Shaughnessy (Limerick, W.), Mr. Thomas O'Donnell, and Mr. Galloway (Manchester, S.W.); Answers, The Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury (Sir A. Acland-Hood, Somersetshire, Wellington), and Mr. A. J. Balfour 64

Venezuela.—Question, Mr. Gibson Bowles; Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour ... 65

The Easter Holidays.—Question, Mr. Farquharson (Aberdeenshire, W.); Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 65

Selection (Standing Committees).—Mr. Halsey reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged the following Member from the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures, Mr. Attorney-General; and had appointed in substitution, Mr. Solicitor-General 66

Report to lie upon the Table.

Standing Orders.—Resolutions reported from the Committee:

1. "That, in the case of the Beckenham Urban District Council Bill, Petition for additional Provision, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with. That the parties be permitted to introduce their additional Provision if the Committee on the Bill think fit."

2. "That, in the case of the Leigh Corporation Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 129 in the case of the Petition of the 'Reverend Bernard Vaughan and others' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

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3. "That, in the case of the North-Eastern Railway Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 129 in the case of the Castleford Urban District Council against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

4. "That, in the case of the Wigan Corporation Tramways Bill, Petition for additional Provision, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with. That the parties be permitted to introduce their additional Provision if the Committee on the Bill think fit."

Resolutions agreed to 66

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have agreed to, Bank Holidays (Ireland) Bill, without Amendment; Light Locomotives (Ireland) Bill, with Amendments 66

NEW BILL.

Sheep Scab Bill.—"To amend the Diseases of Animals Act, 1894, in relation to Sheep Scab," presented by Mr. Hanbury; to be read a second time to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 119.] 66

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill.—Order for Second Reading, read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Sir Charles Dilke (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) 67
Mr. Brigg (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley) 72

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'That' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'this House calls on His Majesty's Government before acting, in the case of Crown Colonies or Protectorates in South Africa, on any agreement as to Native labour or Native taxation come to by the recent Conference, to place the proposals before Parliament.'"—*(Sir Charles Dilke.)*

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Sir John Gorst (Cambridge University) 72
Mr. Herbert Samuel (Yorkshire, N.R., Cleveland) 78
Mr. Markham (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield) 85
Sir J. Fergusson (Manchester, N.E.) 88
Sir William Harcourt (Monmouthshire, W.) 90
The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. J. Chamberlain, Birmingham, W.) 101
Mr. Keir Hardie (Merthyr Tydvil) 113

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question again proposed.

Mr. Alfred Davies (Carmarthen Boroughs) 115
Sir John Leng (Dundee) 118

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

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Employment of Children Bill.—[SECOND READING.]—Order for Second Reading, read.

Sir John Leng (*Dundee*) 119
The Secretary of State for the Home Department (*Mr. Akers Douglas, Kent, St. Augustine's*)... 119
Mr. Asquith (*Fifeshire, E.*) 120
Mr. Galloway (*Manchester, S.W.*) 121
Sir Walter Foster (*Derbyshire, Ilkeston*) 122
Mr. Parker Smith (*Lanarkshire, Partick*) 123
Mr. T. M. Healy (*Louth, N.*) 125
Sir George Bartley (*Islington, N.*) 125
Mr. Tennant (*Berwickshire*) 126
Sir John Gorst (*Cambridge University*) 126
Dr. Macnamara (*Camberwell, N.*) 127
Sir Charles Renshaw (*Renfrewshire, W.*) 128
Mr. John Burns (*Battersea*) 129
Mr. Seely (*Lincoln*) 132

Bill read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc.

County Councils (Bills in Parliament) Bill.—[SECOND READING.]—Order for Second Reading, read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Debate arising.

Mr. T. M. Healy (*Louth, N.*) 133
Mr. John Burns (*Battersea*) 134
The President of the Local Government Board (*Mr. Walter Long, Bristol, S.*) 134
Mr. Caldwell (*Lanarkshire, Mid*) 135

And, it being half-past Seven of the Clock, the Debate stood adjourned. Debate to be resumed To-morrow.

EVENING SITTING.

AGRICULTURE (WALES).

Mr. Herbert Roberts (*Denbighshire, W.*) 135
Mr. Ellis Griffith (*Anglesey*) 139

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this House, the recommendations of the Welsh Land Commission demand the immediate consideration of Parliament."—(*Mr. Herbert Roberts.*)

Sir H. Aubrey-Fletcher (*Sussex, Lewes*) 141
Mr. Black (*Banffshire*) 143
Major Wyndham-Quin (*Glamorganshire, S.*) 143
Mr. Griffith-Boscawen (*Kent, Tunbridge*) 144

Question amended, by inserting, after the second word "the," the word "unanimous."—(*Mr. Griffith Boscawen.*)

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Col. Kenyon-Slaney (Shropshire, Newport) 145
Mr. Bryn Roberts (Carnarvonshire, Eifion) 146
The President of the Board of Agriculture (Mr. Hanbury, Preston) ... 147
Mr. Edwards (Radnor) 149

Question, as amended, put and agreed to.

Resolved, "That, in the opinion of this House, the unanimous recommendations of the Welsh Land Commission demand the immediate consideration of Parliament."

FORESTRY.

Mr. Herbert Lewis (Flint Boroughs) 150

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That it is expedient to give effect, as early as possible, to the recommendations of the Departmental Committee on Forestry."—(*Mr. J. H. Lewis.*)

The President of the Board of Agriculture (Mr. Hanbury, Preston) ... 155

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

AFFORESTATION IN IRELAND.

Mr. Nolan (Louth, S.) 156

Notice taken that forty Members were not present; House counted, and forty Members not being present—

The House was adjourned at Eleven of the Clock till To-morrow.

Adjourned at Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: WEDNESDAY, 25TH MARCH, 1903.

The House met at two of the Clock.

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS.—The Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of Ways and Means ... 157

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

London County Council (Electric Supply) Bill.—Order [9th March] for Second Reading this day, read and discharged; Bill withdrawn 157

West Ham Corporation Bill.—Order [2nd March] that the West Ham Corporation Bill be committed, read and discharged; Bill withdrawn... ... 157

Charing Cross, Euston, and Hampstead Railway Bill; Great Northern Railway Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 157

Coventry and Arley Railway Bill.—Reported [Preamble not proved]; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 157

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP A).—Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher reported from the Committee on Group A of Private Bills; That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Friday, at Eleven of the Clock.

Report to lie upon the Table 157

Grindleford, Baslow, and Bakewell Railway Bill.—Petition for additional provision; referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills ... 157

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RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP 1).—Ordered, That Mr. Norman Scorgie do attend the Committee on Group 1 of Railway Bills To-morrow, at half-past Eleven of the Clock 157

Bath Corporation Water Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 158

North Middlesex Gas Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table 158

PETITIONS.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.—Petition from Birmingham, in favour; to lie upon the Table 158

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Canisbay; Creich; Rogart; and Annan; to lie upon the Table 158

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—Petition from Lanark, against; to lie upon the Table 158

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.—Petitions against: From Swansea; and Grantham; to lie upon the Table 158

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.—Petition from Dunoon, against disestablishment; to lie upon the Table 158

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Stamford; and Wood Green; to lie upon the Table 159

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY IN LANCASHIRE.—Petition from Salford, for prohibition; to lie upon the Table 159

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).—Copy presented, of Reports and Papers relating to the Training of Teachers for the year 1901–2 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 159

UNIVERSITY (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889 (ORDINANCE).—Copy presented, of University Court Ordinance No. VII. (Aberdeen No. 1) (Foundation of the Burnett-Fletcher Chair of History and Archæology in the University of Aberdeen) [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 93.] 159

AMERICAN MAIL SERVICE.—Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 16th March; *Sir John Leng*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 94.] 159

LAND PURCHASE (IRELAND).—Return ordered, "of the Resolutions and Statement adopted by the Irish Landowners' Convention on the 10th day of October, 1902, and Report of the Irish Land Conference, dated the 3rd day of January, 1903, and Minute on the Land Conference Report adopted on the 7th day of January, 1903, by the Executive Committee of the Irish Landowners' Convention."—(*Mr. Wyndham.*)

Return presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 89.] 159

LAND PURCHASE ACTS.—Return ordered, "showing, as far as practicable, for each year (or other stated period) (1) the lowest and highest prices (in each calendar year) of Guaranteed Land Stock; and (2) the number and amount of loans under the Land Purchase Acts (as defined in Section 48 (1) of The Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1896), together with the total amount of the acreage purchased."—(*Mr. Wyndham.*)

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Return presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 90.] 159

LAND LAW ACTS (IRELAND).—Return ordered, "showing, according to provinces and counties the number of cases in which judicial rents have been fixed by all the methods provided by the Land Law Acts for a first and a second Statutory term, respectively, to the 31st day of December, 1902, with particulars as to acreage, former rents of holdings, and percentages of reduction in rents."—(*Mr. Wyndham.*)

Return presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 91.] 160

LAND PURCHASE (IRELAND) ACTS.—Copy ordered, "of Report by Mr. W. F. Bailey, Legal Assistant Commissioner, of an inquiry into the present condition of tenant purchasers under the Land Purchase Acts."—(*Mr. Wyndham.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 92.] 160

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

VISIT OF TRAINING VESSEL TO LOCHBROOM, ROSS-SHIRE.—Question, Mr. Weir (Ross and Cromarty); Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 160

ROYAL MARINES—SEPARATION ALLOWANCE WHILE AFLOAT.—Question, Mr. Lockie (Devonport); Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 161

NEW NAVAL REGULATIONS—PAY OF WARRANT OFFICERS ON PROMOTION.—Question, Mr. Reginald Lucas (Portsmouth); Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 161

BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS COMMISSION—REPORT.—Question, Mr. Field (Dublin, St. Patrick); Answer, Mr. Walter Long 161

IRELAND—TENDERS FOR DRUGS—BRITISH AND AMERICAN MANUFACTURERS.—Question, Sir John Rolleston (Leicester); Answer, Mr. Wyndham ... 162

SCOTLAND—REMOVAL OF SHERIFF'S COURT FROM INVERARY TO DUNOON.—Mr. Orr-Ewing (Ayr Burghs); Answer, Mr. A. Graham Murray 162

PERSIAN TARIFF ON BRITISH GOODS.—Question, Sir John Leng (Dundee); Answer, Lord Cranborne 162

RAW SUGAR—AVERAGE PRICES.—Question, Mr. Sydney Buxton (Tower Hamlets, Poplar); Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 163

EDUCATION ACT, 1902—SCHEDULE 2 (ii.)—Question, Mr. Henry Hobhouse (Somersetshire, E.); Answer, Sir William Anson 163

STRABANE RAILWAY STATION—RIGHT OF WAY.—Question, Mr. O'Doherty (Donegal, N.); Answer, Mr. Atkinson 163

PROSECUTION FOR SHEEP SCAB.—Question, Mr. Field; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 164

STRABANE PETTY SESSIONS—REMARKS OF RESIDENT MAGISTRATE.—Question, Mr. O'Doherty; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 165

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INQUIRIES IN IRELAND — SHORTHAND WRITERS—REMUNERATION.—Questions, Mr. O'Doherty; Answers Mr. Wyndham .. 165

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Irish Board of Works—Money Advanced for Planting.—Question, Mr. Condon (Tipperary, E.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 166

Royal Commission on Militia and Volunteers.—Question, Sir Howard Vincent (Sheffield, Central); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 167

Ashton-under-Lyne Barracks—Cost of Construction and Repairs—Question, Mr. Herbert Whiteley (Ashton-under-Lyne); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 168

Army Clothing Contract—Fair Wages.—Question, Mr. Goulding (Wiltshire, Devizes); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 168

Somaliland—Press Censorship.—Question, Mr. Labouchere (Northampton); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 169

Postal Service—Compulsory Retirement.—Question, Mr. James O'Connor (Wicklow, W.); Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 169

Postal Servants' Deputation at Birmingham—Questions, Mr. James O'Connor; Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 169

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Tower of London—Armour Collection.—Question, Mr. Stuart Samuel (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel); Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford) 170

Royal Engineers and Barrack Construction—Report of Committee.—Question, Mr. Charles Hobhouse (Bristol, E.); Answer, Mr. Brodrick ... 171

Army Advisory Board.—Question, Mr. Charles Hobhouse; Answer, Mr. Brodrick 171

Seamen and Bad Teeth.—Question, Mr. Weir (Ross and Cromarty); Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Arnold-Forster, Belfast, W.) ... 171

Foreign Naval Expenditure.—Questions, Sir Edgar Vincent (Exeter); Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 171

Brown Institute—Vivisection School.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Akers Douglas, Kent, St. Augustine's) 172

The Riots in Trinidad.—Question, Mr. Sydney Buxton (Tower Hamlets, Poplar); Answer, the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. J. Chamberlain, Birmingham, W.)... 172

Treaty Between United States and Cuba.—Questions, Mr. Charles McArthur (Liverpool, Exchange), and Mr. Gibson Bowles (Lynn Regis); Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Lord Cranborne, Rochester) 172

British Merchants' Losses in the French Congo.—Question, Mr. Charles McArthur; Answer, Lord Cranborne 174

Native Labour in the African Mines.—Questions, Mr. Channing (Northamptonshire, E.), Mr. Herbert Samuel (Yorkshire, N.R., Cleveland), and Mr. Whitley (Halifax); Answers, Lord Cranborne and Mr. J. Chamberlain 174

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VACCINATION.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Walter Long, Bristol, S.) 175

FISHERIES BOARD BILL.—Question, Mr. Doughty (Great Grimsby); Answer, The President of the Board of Agriculture (Mr. Hanbury, Preston) 176

PREVENTION OF ACCIDENTS TO RAILWAY SERVANTS.—Question, Mr. John Ellis (Nottingham, Rushcliffe); Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Gerald Balfour, Leeds, Central)... 176

RAILWAY COUPLINGS.—Question, Mr. Channing; Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 177

PAY OF POSTAL SERVANTS.—Question, Mr. Keir Hardie (Merthyr Tydvil); Answer, The Postmaster-General (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.) 178

VACCINATION LYMPH IN SCOTLAND.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. A. Graham Murray, Buteshire) 178

HOLDINGS IN THE CROFTING COUNTIES—PURCHASE OF LAND.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, Mr. A. Graham Murray 179

PENALTIES FOR ILLEGAL TRAWLING.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, Mr. A. Graham Murray 179

SCOTTISH LICENSING LAW.—Question, Mr. Crombie (Kincardineshire); Answer, Mr. A. Graham Murray 179

NEWPORT (MON.) EDUCATION SCHEME.—Question, Mr. D. A. Thomas (Merthyr Tydvil); Answer, The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education (Sir William Anson, Oxford University) 180

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.—Question, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (Stirling Burghs); Answer, The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 181

NEW BILL.

Women's Disabilities (Removal) Bill.—"To amend the franchise by the Removal of Women's Disabilities," presented by Colonel Denny; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, May 20th, and to be printed. [Bill 120.] 181

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill.—Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; to be read the third time to-morrow 181

NEW MEMBER SWORN.—Edward Mitchell, esquire, for the County of Fermanagh (North Fermanagh Division) 181

Irish Land Bill.

The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Wyndham, Dover) 181
Mr. John Redmond (Waterford) 208
Col. Saunderson (Armagh, N.) 216
Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (Stirling Burghs) 220
Mr. T. W. Russell (Tyrone, S.) 222
Mr. Gibson Bowles (Lynn Regis) 226
Mr. Coghill (Stoke-upon-Trent) 227
Mr. T. M. Healy (Louth, N.) 229
Mr. Wyndham 235

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County Councils (Bills in Parliament) Bill.—Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Question [24th March], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

Mr. Caldwell (Lanarkshire, Mid.) 240
Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice (Wiltshire, Cricklade) 241
Mr. Buchanan (Perthshire, E.) 241
Mr. Henry Hobhouse (Somersetshire, E.) 242
The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Walter Long, Bristol, S.) 242

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Law, etc.

Berwickshire County Town Bill.—Read a second time and committed for Monday next 242

Borough Funds Bill.—Read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Law, etc. 242

Local Government (Transfer of Powers) Bill.—Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Question [9th March], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

Mr. Caldwell (Lanarkshire, Mid) 243
Sir. Francis Powell (Wigan) 244
Mr. Brigg (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley) 244
Mr. Lloyd-George (Carnarvon Boroughs) 244
The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Walter Long, Bristol, S.) 244
Sir Albert Rollit (Islington, S.) 245

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Law, etc.

And there being no further Business set down for the Afternoon Sitting, Mr. Speaker left the Chair until the Evening Sitting.

EVENING SITTING.

Army Enlistments.

Mr. Pirie (Aberdeen, N.) 245
Mr. Peel (Manchester, S.) 249

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House, while welcoming the recent War Office Memorandum regarding the character of recruits, is of opinion that, in order to adequately fit the British soldier for his duties at home and abroad, greater efforts should be made and precautions taken to secure a higher standard of physique of recruits accepted; and that as regards age a birth certificate or other reliable evidence should, wherever possible, be required; no man being accepted or retained who is known or believed to be under the age of eighteen years."—(*Mr. Pirie.*)

Mr. Priestley (Grantham) 255
The Financial Secretary to the War Office (Lord Stanley, Lancashire, Westhoughton) 256
Mr. Charles Hobhouse (Bristol, E.) 258
Major Rasch (Essex, Chelmsford) 263
Mr. John Burns (Battersea) 264
Sir H. Campbell-Bannermen (Stirling Burghs) 271
The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford) ... 272

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'secure,' to the end of the Question, and add the words 'an adequate standard of physique of recruits accepted; and that as regards age no man should be accepted who is known or believed to be under the age of eighteen years.'"—(*Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Sir Charles Dilke (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) 273
Colonel Kenyon-Slaney (Shropshire, Newport) 273

Question put, and negatived.

Words added.

Main Question, as amended, put and agreed to.

Resolved, "That this House, while welcoming the recent War Office Memorandum regarding the character of recruits, is of opinion that, in order to adequately fit the British soldier for his duties at home and abroad, greater efforts should be made and precautions taken to secure an adequate standard of physique of recruits accepted; and that as regards age no man should be accepted who is known or believed to be under the age of eighteen years."

Adjourned at seven minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: THURSDAY, 26TH MARCH, 1903.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Bangor Corporation Bill [H.L.].—Report from His Majesty's Attorney-General received, and ordered to lie on the Table 277

Birmingham District Tramways Bill [H.L.].—The meeting of the Standing Orders Committee (which stands appointed for this day) put off to Monday next 277

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STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE — Report from, That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Thames River Steamboat Service Bill ought to be dispensed with, provided that Clause 27 be struck out of the Bill... 277

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the petition for a Bill by the Jewish Colonisation Association ought to be dispensed with, and leave given to introduce the Bill 277

Read and agreed to.

Hexham Gas Bill [H.L.].— Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 277

Lima Railways Bill [H.L.]; Indiarubber, Guttapercha, and Telegraph Works Company Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments... 277

North's Navigation Collieries Bill [H.L.]; Faversham Gas Bill [H.L.]; Exeter Railway Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments 277

West Bromwich Corporation Bill [H.L.].—The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the opposition to Bill was withdrawn: Bill Committed 277

St. Philip's Chapel (Regent Street) Bill [H.L.]; All Saints, Poplar (Rate Abolition) Bill [H.L.].—Committed 277

Bangor Corporation Bill [H.L.].—Read 2ª [according to order] 277

Electric Lighting (London) Bill [H.L.].—Committed: The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 277

Light Locomotives (Ireland) Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to 277

Frinton-on-Sea Sea Defences Bill [H.L.]; Rickmansworth Gas Bill [H.L.]; Pelican and British Life Office Bill [H.L.]; Wellington (Salop) Gas Bill [H.L.]; Southampton Harbour Bill [H.L.]; Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation Bill [H.L.]; Harrow and Stanmore Gas Bill [H.L.]; Bournemouth Corporation Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Poole and District Electric Traction Bill [H.L.]; Birmingham Corporation Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; viz.:—

E. Romney.
L. Sandhurst.
L. Shute (*V. Barrington.*)
L. Newton (Chairman).
L. Wandsworth.

Agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly. The Committee to meet on Thursday the 30th of April next at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills 278

South-Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway Bill [H.L.]; South-Eastern and London, Chatham, and Dover Railways Bill [H.L.]; Sutton Coldfield Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Cardiff Railway Bill [H.L.]; Manchester Southern Tramways (Lancashire) Bill [H.L.]; Manchester Southern Tramways (Chester) Bill [H.L.]; South Lancashire Tramways Bill [H.L.];

Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Bill [H.L.]; North Cheshire Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; viz.:

E. Camperdown (Chairman).
E. Lytton.
L. Ellenborough.
L. Hylton.
L. Rosmead.

Agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly. The Committee to meet on Thursday the 30th of April next at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills 278

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).—No. 2944. United States (Consular District of Baltimore).

No. 2945. Germany (Estimates of German Empire).
No. 2946. Chile (Coquimbo). 279

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).—Report and Papers relating to the training of teachers for the year 1901-1902. 279

INDIA (ENTERTAINMENT OF INDIAN AND COLONIAL GUESTS).—Correspondence relating to the entertainment of Indian and Colonial guests visiting this country by invitation of His Majesty's Government 279

IRISH LAND COMMISSION (PROCEEDINGS).—Return for the month of January, 1903. 279

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—Tables showing the populations of counties, districts, and burghs in Scotland with reference to the proposals of the Bill 279

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, AND DEATHS, AND VACCINATION.—Forty-Eighth Annual Report of the Registrar-General in Scotland for the year 1902, and Thirty-eighth Annual Report on Vaccination.

Presented [by Command]; and ordered to lie on the Table 279

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889.—University Court Ordinance No. VII. (Aberdeen No. 1) Foundation of the Burnett-Fletcher Chair of History and Archæology in the University of Aberdeen; laid before the House [pursuant to Act]; and to be printed. (No. 24.)... 279

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.—Standing Order No. XXXIX. considered [according to order]; and suspended for this day's sitting 280

Prevention of Corruption Bill [H.L.]. — Amendments reported [according to order]; and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow.

Earl Russell 280

Amendment moved—

"In Clause 16, line 28, after 'steamship' to insert 'or other vessel propelled by mechanical power.'"—(*Earl Russell.*)

The Lord Chancellor (*The Earl of Halsbury*) 280

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On Question, Amendment negatived.

Bill read 3^a, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Lord Denman 281
The Under Secretary of State for War (The Earl of Hardwicke) 282
Lord Ribblesdale 283

QUEENSLAND AND THE REPATRIATION OF THE KANAKAS.

Lord Lamington 285
The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (The Earl of Onslow) ... 285

House adjourned during pleasure.

House resumed.

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill.—Brought from the Commons, and read 1^a: Then (Standing Order No. XXXIX. having been suspended) Bill read 2^a (The Earl Waldegrave). Committee negatived. Bill read 3^a, and passed 287

House adjourned at ten minutes past Twelve o'clock a.m., till Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: THURSDAY, 26TH MARCH, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS.—The Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of Ways and Means ... 287

NEW WRIT.

New Writ for the County of Cornwall (North-Western, or Camborne, Division), in the room of William Sproston Caine, esquire, deceased.—(*Mr. Herbert Gladstone.*) 287

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 63 COMPLIED WITH).—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order No. 63 has been complied with, viz.:—

Thames Steamboat Trust Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time 288

Dublin Improvement (Bull Alley Area) Bill; Great Western Railway (Pension Fund) Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 288

Great Eastern Railway (No. 1) Bill.—Reported with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 288

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP NO. 1).—MR. KIMBER reported from the Committee on Group No. 1 of Railway Bills, That, there being no business ready for the consideration of the Committee, they had adjourned until Tuesday next, at half-past Eleven of the Clock.

Report to lie upon the Table 288

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RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP NO. 2).—Captain BOWLES reported from the Committee on Group No. 2 of Railway Bills, That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned until Monday next, at Eleven of the Clock.

Report to lie upon the Table 288

PETITIONS.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Berks; Derby; Shropshire; and Lancaster; to lie upon the Table ... 288

EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN BILL.—Petition from Birmingham, in favour; to lie upon the Table 289

LAND VALUES ASSESSMENT AND RATING BILL.—Petition from Greenock, in favour; to lie upon the Table... 289

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.—Petitions against: From Leighton Buzzard; Newtown and Llanidloes; Maryport; and Hastings; to lie upon the Table 289

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.—Petitions against establishment: From Grantown; and Dingwall; to lie upon the Table 289

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.—Petition from Soham, in favour; to lie upon the Table... 289

SITE VALUES OF INSANITARY AREAS.—Petition from Battersea, for legislation; to lie upon the Table 289

VAGRANTS (COMPULSORY VACCINATION AND RE-VACCINATION).—Petition from Wirral, for legislation; to lie upon the Table 289

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EAST INDIA (ENTERTAINMENT OF INDIAN AND COLONIAL GUESTS).—Copy presented, of correspondence relating to the entertainment of Indian and Colonial guests visiting this country by invitation of His Majesty's Government [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 289

EAST INDIA (INCOME AND EXPENDITURE).—Return presented, relative thereto [Address 4th March; *Sir Henry Fowler*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 95.] 289

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1902–1903 (STATEMENT OF PROGRAMME OF SHIPBUILDING, ETC.).—Copy presented, of statement showing probable effect on the programme of shipbuilding, reconstruction, repairs, maintenance, etc., due to the re-appropriation of cash provision, etc. [by Command]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 96.] 289

IRISH LAND COMMISSION (PROCEEDINGS).—Copy presented, of Return of proceedings during the month of January, 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 290

BIRTHS, DEATHS, MARRIAGES, AND VACCINATION (SCOTLAND).—Copy presented, of the Forty-eighth Annual Report on the Births, Deaths, and Marriages in Scotland for 1902, and Thirty-eighth Annual Report on Vaccination [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 290

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL. Copy presented, of Tables showing the populations of counties, districts, and burghs in Scotland, with reference to the proposals of the Bill [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 290

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TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).—Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 2944 to 2946 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 290

LUNATIC ASYLUMS (IRELAND).—Return ordered, "showing in respect of each asylum district in Ireland for each of the last twenty-one years, 1882 to 1902 inclusive, the contributions towards the provision of district asylums and the maintenance of lunatics in asylums in the following form:—(1) Year; (2) Charges for maintenance—(*a*) fuel, water, and light; (*b*) salaries and superannuations; (*c*) clothing; and (*d*) other expenses, including minor repairs and upkeep; (3) Repayments, including principal and interest to Commissioners of Public Works, of loans advanced in respect of expenditure on new works, additions and alterations, purchase of additional land, etc. (exclusive of minor repairs and alterations); (4) Total of expenditure in preceding columns; (5) Receipts from—(*e*) Parliamentary grant; (*f*) paying patients and other sources except (*e*) and (*g*); and (*g*) rates."—(*Mr. Clancy.*) 290

FLEETS (GREAT BRITAIN AND FOREIGN COUNTRIES).—Return ordered, "showing the Fleets of Great Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Italy, United States of America, and Japan, distinguishing: battleships, built and building; cruisers, built and building; coast defence vessels, built and building; torpedo vessels, torpedo boat destroyers, and torpedo boats, built and building."

"Return to show date of launch, displacement, and armaments, reduced to one common scale (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 322, of Session 1902)."—(*Sir Charles Dilke.*)... 291

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SOUTH AFRICA — MINING CLAIMS LOTTERY. — Question, Mr. Keir Hardie (Merthyr Tydvil); Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 291

H.M.S. "HIGHFLYER"—WORKING OF BOILERS.—Question, Mr. Harmsworth (Caithness-shire): Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 292

IMPROVED SHOOTING IN THE NAVY.— Question, Mr. Harmsworth; Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 292

KINGWILLIAMSTOWN (CORK) POSTMASTER—SUPERANNUATION ALLOWANCE.— Question, Mr. Flynn (Cork, N.); Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain ... 293

EASTBOURNE SUB-POST OFFICES.—Question, Mr. Freeman Thomas (Hastings); Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 293

UGANDA RAILWAY (MATERIALS) RETURN.—Question, Mr. O'Doherty (Donegal, N.); Answer, Lord Cranborne 293

EXPORT OF OFFALS.—Question, Sir Edward Strachey (Somersetshire, S.); Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 294

"LABOUR GAZETTE," RETURN OF NON-FATAL INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS.— Question, Sir Edward Strachey (Somersetshire, S.); Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 294

BRITISH CAPITAL IN FOREIGN AND COLONIAL UNDERTAKINGS.—Question, Mr. Mitchell (Lancashire, Bury); Answer, Mr. Ritchie 295

DUTY PAID UNDER SUGAR AND CORN TAXES.—Question, Mr. Lough (Islington, W.); Answer, Mr. Ritchie 295

MARRIAGE OF POSTAL SERVANTS—INCOME TAX ON JOINT INCOMES.—Question, Mr. Schwann (Manchester, N.); Answer, Mr. Ritchie 295

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN IRELAND—UNEXPENDED BALANCE.—Question, Mr. Ffrench (Wexford, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 296

ARMY—HOME STATIONS OUTSIDE THE UNITED KINGDOM.—Question, Mr. Arthur Lee (Hampshire, Fareham); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 296

ARMY—CHAPLAINS FOR TROOPS IN SCOTLAND.—Question, Col. Denny (Kilmarnock Burghs); Answer, Mr Brodrick 296

ROYAL ENGINEERS—COMPULSORY VACCINATION OF THE CIVIL STAFF.—Question, Mr. Corrie Grant (Warwickshire, Rugby); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 297

BIRCHING OF YOUTHFUL OFFENDERS.—Question, Mr. Keir Hardie; Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas 297

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UNDESIRABLE SOLDIERS.—Questions, Mr. Arthur Lee (Hampshire, Fareham); Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford) 298

ROYAL INNISKILLING FUSILIERS.—Question, Dr. Thompson (Monaghan, N.); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 299

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WOOLWICH ARSENAL DISCHARGES.—Question, Mr. Crooks (Woolwich); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 300

NATIVE LABOUR IN SOUTH AFRICA.—Question, Mr. George White (Norfolk, N.W.); Answer, The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Lord Stanley, Lancashire, Westhoughton) 300

BOY RECRUITS FOR THE NAVY.—Question, Mr. Keir Hardie (Merthyr Tydvil); Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Arnold-Forster, Belfast, W.) 301

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CORK MAGISTRACY.—Question, Mr. Sheehan (Cork County, Mid); Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Wyndham, Dover) 306

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BELFAST MEAT CONTRACTS.—Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 308

ROBBERY AT TRALEE BARRACKS.—Question, Mr. Thomas O'Donnell (Kerry, N.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 309

ADMINISTRATION OF IRISH HOUSING ACTS.—Question, Mr. Clancy (Dublin Co., N.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 310

LETTIR (KERRY) SCHOOL.—Question, Mr. Boland (Kerry, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 310

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STRAW ISLAND LIGHTS.—Question, Mr. Joyce (Limerick); Answer, Mr. Bonar Law 313

MARGARETTA SHOALS, GALWAY BAY.—Question, Mr. Joyce; Answer, Mr. Bonar Law 313

KINGSTOWN EAST PIER LIGHTS.—Question, Mr. Mooney (Dublin Co., S.); Answer, Mr. Bonar Law 314

IRISH LIGHTS BOARD BOATS.—Question, Mr. James O'Connor (Wicklow, W.); Answer, Mr. Bonar Law 314

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LONDON EDUCATION BILL.—Question, Dr. Macnamara (Camberwell, N.); Answer, The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 315

MINISTERS IN ATTENDANCE.—Questions, Mr. Gibson Bowles (Lynn Regis); Answers, Mr. A. J. Balfour 315

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.—Question, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (Stirling Burghs); Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 316

Light Locomotives (Ireland) Bill.—Lords Amendments to be considered forthwith; considered and agreed to 316

County Courts Jurisdiction Extension Bill.—Reported, with Amendments, from the Standing Committee on Law, etc.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 97.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 97.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 122.] 316

NEW BILLS.

Pharmacy Bill.—"To alter and amend the Pharmacy Acts, 1852 to 1868," presented by Mr. Lough; supported by Mr. Marshall Hall, Mr. Remnant, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Ellis Griffith, Mr. Wanklyn, Mr. Tomkinson, and Mr. Osmond Williams; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 123.] 316

Small Dwellings (Acquisition) Bill.—"To amend the provisions of the Small Dwellings Acquisition Act, 1899," presented by Sir Thomas Wrightson; supported by Mr. Claude Hay, Mr. Graham, Mr. Peel, Sir Alfred Hickman, Captain Jessel, Mr. Moon, and Mr. Pike Pease; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 6th May, and to be printed. [Bill 124.] ... 316

SUPPLY [4TH ALLOTTED DAY.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1903–4.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £1,920,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the charge for the Staff for Engineer Services, and Expenditure for Royal Engineer Works, Buildings, and Repairs, at Home and Abroad (including Purchases), which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904.

Sir Arthur Hayter (*Walsall*) 317
Mr. Charles Hobhouse (*Bristol, E.*) 318
Col. Welby (*Taunton*) 318
Mr. Lough (*Islington, W.*) 318

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £1,759,000, be granted for the said service."—(*Mr. Lough.*)

Mr. Courtenay Warner (*Staffordshire, Lichfield*) 321
Mr. Whitley (*Halifax*) 323
Col. Pilkington (*Lancashire, Newton*) 325
The Financial Secretary to the War Office (*Lord Stanley, Lancashire, Westhoughton*) 325
Mr. Gibson Bowles (*Lynn Regis*) 328
Sir Charles Dilke (*Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean*) 329
Capt. Jessel (*St. Pancras, S.*) 330
Mr. Edmund Robertson (*Dundee*) 332
The Secretary of State for War (*Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford*) ... 333
Mr. Renwick (*Newcastle-on-Tyne*) 336
Mr. Beckett (*Yorkshire, N.R., Whitby*) 337
Sir William Allan (*Gateshead*) 338
Sir John Colomb (*Great Yarmouth*) 338
Mr. Tomkinson (*Cheshire, Crewe*)... 341
Col. Kenyon-Slaney (*Shropshire, Newport*) 341
Major Seely (*Isle of Wight*) 341
Mr. Brodrick 342
Mr. Courtenay Warner 345
Mr. Lough 345

Question put.

The Committee divided—Ayes, 83; Noes, 236. (Division List No. 40.)

Original Question again proposed.

Sir Arthur Hayter... 349
Mr. Brodrick 349
Mr. Whitley 350
Lord Stanley 351

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £4,820,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the charge for the supply and repair of warlike and other stores, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

Mr. Gibson Bowles... 352
Sir Charles Dilke 352
Mr. Powell Williams (*Birmingham, S.*) 352
Mr. Charles Hobhouse 353
Sir William Allan 353
Lord Stanley 354
Mr. Crooks (*Woolwich*) 355

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item C be reduced by £100."—(*Mr. Crooks.*)

Mr. Brodrick 358
Col. Bowles (*Middlesex, Enfield*) 360

Question put and negatived.

Original Question again proposed.

Sir Arthur Hayter 360
Mr. Charles Hobhouse 360
Lord Stanley 361
Mr. Labouchere (Northampton) 362

Whereupon Motion made, and Question put, "That a sum, not exceeding £4,800,000, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

The Committee divided: Ayes, 43; Noes, 259. (Division List No. 41.)

Original Question again proposed.

Sir Charles Dilke 365
Mr. Kearley (Devonport) 365
Sir John Gorst (Cambridge University) 365
Captain Norton (Newington, W.) 366

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £4,819,900, be granted for the said Service."—(*Captain Norton.*)

Mr. Duke (Plymouth) 367
Mr. John Burns (Battersea) 367
Mr. Brodrick 369
Mr. Crooks 370
Sir John Gorst (Cambridge University) 371
Mr. John Burns 372
Mr. Brodrick 372
Lord Hugh Cecil (Greenwich) 373

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 70; Noes, 196. (Division List No. 42.)

Original Question again proposed.

And it being after half-past Seven of the Clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Resolution to be reported upon Monday next; Committee also report Progress; to sit again this evening.

EVENING SITTING.

SUPPLY [4TH ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1903–4.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £1,186,300, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expenses of Naval and Marine Pensions, Gratuities, and Compassionate Allowances, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

Mr. Kearley (Devonport) 376

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £1,186,200, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Kearley.*)

Mr. Reginald Lucas (Portsmouth) ... 378
Mr. Goddard (Ipswich) ... 380
Sir William Allan (Gateshead) ... 381
Sir Frederick Banbury (Camberwell, Peckham) ... 382
Mr. Duke (Plymouth) ... 383
Sir John Leng (Dundee) ... 384
Mr. Lockie (Devonport) ... 385
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Mr. Fenwick (Northumberland, Wansbeck) ... 387
Mr. Seely (Lincoln) ... 388
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Mr. John Wilson (Durham, Mid) ... 390
Lord Willoughby de Eresby (Lincolnshire, Horncastle) ... 390
Sir Charles Dilke (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) ... 391
The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Arnold-Forster, Belfast, W.) ... 392
Sir John Colomb (Great Yarmouth) ... 394
Mr. Seely ... 394

Question put.

Committee divided :—Ayes, 61 ; Noes, 135. (Division List No. 43.)

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. Whitley (Halifax) ... 395
Mr. Reginald Lucas (Portsmouth) ... 396
Mr. Herbert Samuel (Yorkshire, Cleveland) ... 397
Mr. Arnold-Forster ... 397

Question put, and agreed to.

2. £259,000, Medical Establishments and Services.

Mr. Kearley ... 397
Sir John Colomb ... 398
Mr. Groves (Salford, S.) ... 398
Mr. Arnold-Forster ... 399

The Vote was agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £15,500, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the expense of martial law, including the cost of Naval prisons at home and abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1904."

Mr. Kearley ... 399

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £15,400, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Kearley.*)

Mr. Arnold-Forster ... 400
Mr. Runciman (Dewsbury) ... 401
Mr. Pretyman ... 401
Mr. Reginald Lucas ... 401
Mr. Whitley ... 402
Mr. Arnold-Forster ... 402

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Question put.

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 43 ; Noes, 125. (Division List No. 44.)

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported upon Monday next ; Committee to sit again upon Monday next.

Consolidated Fund (No. 1.) Bill.— Read the third time, and passed … .. 404

Poor Prisoners Defence Bill.—Read a second time, and committed to a Select Committee … … … … … … … … 404

Adjourned at five minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS : FRIDAY, 27TH MARCH, 1903.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with :—

Tynemouth and District Tramways [H.L.].

The same was ordered to lie on the Table … … … … … 405

Jewish Colonisation Association Bill [H.L.].—Presented [pursuant to leave given yesterday] ; read 1ª, and referred to the Examiners … … … 405

Life Association of Scotland Bill [H.L.].— Reported, without Amendment … 405

Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Bill [H.L.].—The King's consent signified ; and Bill reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 405

Tynemouth and District Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Read 2ª (according to order) … … … … … … … … … … 405

Nantwich Urban District Council Bill [H.L.] ; Western Trust Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons … … … … 405

South-Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway Bill [H.L.] ; South-Eastern and London, Chatham and Dover Railways Bill [H.L.] ; Sutton Coldfield Corporation Bill [H.L.] ; Cardiff Railway Bill [H.L.] ; Manchester Southern Tramways (Lancashire) Bill [H.L.] ; Manchester Southern Tramways (Cheshire) Bill [H.L.] ; South Lancashire Tramways Bill [H.L.] ; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Bill [H.L.] ; North Cheshire Tramways Bill [H.L.]. -Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Earl of Lauderdale be proposed to the House as a member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Earl of Camperdown ; and that the Earl of Lauderdale be Chairman of the said Committee ; read, and agreed to … … … … … … … … … 406

Dublin Improvement (Bull Alley Area) Bill. —Brought from the Commons ; read 1ª ; and referred to the examiners … … … … … 406

Great Western Railway (Pension Fund) Bill.—Brought from the Commons ; read 1ª ; and referred to the examiners … … … … … 406

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PETITIONS.

SHOPS (EARLY CLOSING) BILL [H.L.].—Petitions in favour of; of Reading Early Closing Association; read, and ordered to lie on the Table... 406

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EMIGRATION.—Report on the Emigrants' Information Office, for the year ended 31st December, 1902 406

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS (IRELAND).—Return of the Prices of Agricultural products and live stock, for the year 1902 406

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.

Annual report of proceedings under the Tithe Acts, 1836 to 1891, the Copyhold Act, 1894, the Inclosure Acts, 1845 to 1899, the Agricultural Holding Acts, 1883 to 1900, the Drainage and Improvement of Land Acts, the Universities and College Estate Acts, 1858 to 1898, the Glebe Lands Act, 1888, etc., etc., for the year 1902, together with a summary of the powers and duties of the Board of Agriculture under the statutes, and the method of administration.

Annual reports of proceedings under the Diseases of Animals Acts, the Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Acts, etc., etc., for the year 1902 406

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES (1901).—Summary tables, area, houses, and population, also population classified by ages, condition as to marriage, occupations, birthplaces and infirmities.

Presented [by command] and ordered to lie on the Table 407

HOUSE OF LORDS OFFICES.—Leave given to the Committee to report from time to time; First Report from the Select Committee made, to be printed, and to be considered on Monday next. (No. 25) 407

Prevention of Corruption Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª [according to order]; an Amendment (Privilege) made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons ... 407

Shops (Early Closing) Bill [H.L.].—Amendments reported [according to order], and Bill to be read 3ª on the second sitting day after the recess at Easter 407

Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Amendment) Bill [H.L.].—SECOND READING.]—Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

Lord Alverstone 407

Moved that the Bill be now read 2ª.—(*Lord Alverstone.*)

The Lord Chancellor (*The Earl of Halsbury*) 409

On Question, agreed to; Bill read 2ª [according to order], and referred to a Select Committee.

COUNCIL FOR NATIONAL DEFENCE.—Order of the day read for resuming the debate on the motion of the Lord Rosebery to resolve, "That this House desires to express its approval of the proposed Council of National Defence, and its earnest hope that the first efforts of that Council may be directed to the adjustment of the national armaments and to the naval, military, and financial conditions of the Empire."

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Debate resumed accordingly.

The Marquess of Ripon 408
The Under Secretary of State for War (*The Earl of Hardwicke*) ... 419
Lord Burghclere 430
The Earl of Camperdown 437
Lord Brassey 443
Earl Spencer 448
The Lord President (*The Duke of Devonshire*) 453

On Question, Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Nine o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: FRIDAY, 27TH MARCH, 1903.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

MESSAGE TO ATTEND THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS.—The House went; and being returned—Mr. SPEAKER reported the Royal Assent to—

1. Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Act, 1903.
2. Bank Holiday (Ireland) Act, 1903.
3. Light Locomotives (Ireland) Act, 1903. 464

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS.—The Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of Ways and Means... 464

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

LAND DRAINAGE PROVISIONAL ORDER.—Bill to confirm a Provisional Order under The Land Drainage Act, 1861, relating to lands in the parishes of Aslackby and Dowsby, in the county of Lincoln, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Hanbury and Mr. Hayes Fisher 464

Land Drainage Provisional Order Bill.—"To confirm a Provisional Order under The Land Drainage Act, 1861, relating to lands in the parishes of Aslackby and Dowsby, in the county of Lincoln," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 125.] 465

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP A).—Ordered, That Thomas Messer Sturgess do attend the Committee on Group A of Private Bills on Monday next at Eleven of the Clock 465

Cork Harbour Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 465

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP NO. 1).—Ordered, That E. B. Cargill do attend the Committee on Group No. 1 of Railway Bills on Tuesday next, at half-past Eleven of the Clock 465

PETITIONS.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.—Petition from Southampton, in favour; to lie upon the Table 466

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Eassie and Nevay; and Newtyle; to lie upon the Table 466

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EDUCATION IN THE METROPOLIS.—Petition from Battersea, for legislation; to lie upon the Table 466

LAND VALUES ASSESSMENT AND RATING BILL.—Petition from Battersea, in favour; to lie upon the Table... 466

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.—Petitions against: From Goole; and Guisborough; to lie upon the Table 466

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.—Petitions against establishment: From Inverness; Jedburgh; and Broughty Ferry; to lie upon the Table . 466

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Little Halingbury; and West Hendon; to lie upon the Table 466

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.—Copy presented, of Annual Report of Proceedings under the Tithe Acts, Copyhold Act, 1894, Inclosure Acts, and other Acts for the year 1902, together with a summary of the powers and duties of the Board under these Statutes [by Command]; to lie upon the Table ... 466

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.—Copy presented, of Annual Reports of Proceedings under the Diseases of Animals Acts, the Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Acts, etc., for the year 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 466

EMIGRATION (COLONIES).—Copy presented, of Report on the Emigrants' Information Office for the year ended 31st December, 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 467

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS (IRELAND).—Copy presented, of Return of Prices of Agricultural Products and Live Stock for the year 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 467

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1901.—Copy presented, of Summary Tables, Area, Houses, and Population [by Command]; to lie upon the Table ... 467

EAST INDIA (PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT).—Address for "Copy of a Despatch from the Government of India, dated the 26th day of September, 1901, and of the Reply of the Secretary of State in Council, dated the 8th day of November, 1901, on the subject of Memorials from the officers of the Public Works Department appointed from the Royal Indian Engineering College in the years 1873–1878."—(*Sir Seymour King.*) 467

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

RAILWAY REPAIRS—DANGER TO PUBLIC.—Question, Mr. Bell (Derby); Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas 467

CLERKS TO SURVEYORS OF TAXES.—Question, Mr. T. M. Healy (Louth, N.); Answer, Mr. Hayes Fisher 468

HINCKLEY GUARDIANS—VACCINATION OFFICERS.—Question, Sir Charles M'Laren (Leicestershire, Bosworth); Answer, Mr. Walter Long 468

SALE OF BURGHCLERE POORS LAND.—Question, Mr. Channing (Northamptonshire, E.); Answer, Mr. Griffith Boscawen 468

VACCINATION ACTS—EXEMPTION CERTIFICATES.—Question, Mr. Levy (Leicestershire, Loughborough); Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas 469

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R.A.M.C.—COMPULSORY VACCINATION OF CIVILIAN CLERKS.—Question, Mr. Charles Hobhouse (Bristol, E.); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 469

CHINA MEDAL FOR TIENTSIN VOLUNTEERS.—Question, Mr. Bryce (Aberdeen, S.); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 470

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have agreed to—

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill, without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act for codifying the Law relating to Marine Insurance." [Marine Insurance Bill (Lords)] ... 470

Land Values Assessment and Rating Bill.—[SECOND READING.]—Order for Second Reading, read.

Dr. Macnamara (Camberwell, N.) 470

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Griffith Boscawen (Kent, Tunbridge) 481
Mr. M. White Ridley (Stalybridge) 488

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Mr. Griffith Boscawen.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Mr. Soares (Devonshire, Barnstaple) 490
Mr. Cripps (Lancashire, Stretford) 497
Mr. Thomas Shaw (Hawick Burghs) 506
Mr. Vicary Gibbs (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) 512
Mr. Trevelyan (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland) 517
Mr. Bond (Nottingham, E.) 520
Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (Stirling Burghs) 523
The Secretary to the Local Government Board (Mr. Grant Lawson, Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) 525

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 170; Noes, 183. (Division List No. 45.)

Words added.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Second Reading put off for six months.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have passed a Bill intituled, "An Act to empower the Urban District Council of Nantwich to supply gas; and to provide for the transfer of the undertaking of the Nantwich Gas Company, Limited, to the Council; and to make further and better provision with regard to the supply of electricity; and for the improvement, health, local government, and finance of the district; and for other purposes." [Nantwich Urban District Council Bill [Lords].] 535

Adjourned at twenty minutes before Six o'clock, till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS: MONDAY, 30TH MARCH, 1903.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Old Bridewell Burying Ground Bill [H.L.].—THIRD READING.—Order of the day for the Third Reading read.

Lord Monkswell 537
The Chairman of Committees (*The Earl of Morley*) 537

Bill read 3^{a} and passed, and sent to the Commons.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.—Report from, That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Birmingham District Tramways Bill [H.L.] ought to be dispensed with and the Bill allowed to proceed; read, and agreed to 538

PENTILLIE ESTATE.—Petition for a Private Bill; together with a copy of the proposed Bill annexed thereto; read, and referred to two English judges... 538

LOCHNELL ESTATE.—Petition for a Private Bill; together with a copy of the proposed Bill annexed thereto; read, and referred to judges in Scotland ... 538

Macclesfield and District Electric Tramways Bill [H.L.]. Committed; the Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 538

Plymouth and Stonehouse Gas Bill [H.L.]; Queensland Investment and Land Mortgage Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^{a}, and passed, and sent to the Commons 538

South-Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway Bill [H.L.]; South-Eastern and London, Chatham, and Dover Railways Bill [H.L.]; Sutton Coldfield Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Cardiff Railway Bill [H.L.]; Manchester Southern Tramways (Lancashire) Bill [H.L.]; Manchester Southern Tramways (Cheshire) Bill [H.L.]; South Lancashire Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Bill [H.L.]; North Cheshire Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Lord Wandsworth be proposed to the House as a member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Lord Hylton; read, and agreed to 538

Frinton-on-Sea Sea Defences Bill [H.L.]; Rickmansworth Gas Bill [H.L.]; Pelican and British Empire Life Office Bill [H.L.]; Wellington (Salop) Gas Bill [H.L.]; Southampton Harbour Bill [H.L.]; Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation Bill [H.L.]; Harrow and Stanmore Gas Bill [H.L.]; Bournemouth Corporation Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Poole and District Electric Traction Bill [H.L.]; Birmingham Corporation Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Lord Hylton be proposed to the House as a member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Lord Wandsworth; read, and agreed to 539

PRIVATE AND PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION BILLS.—Ordered, That Standing Orders Nos. 92 and 93 be suspended; and that the time for depositing petitions praying to be heard against Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills, also the time for depositing Documents relating to any Order under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, which would otherwise expire during the adjournment of the House at Easter, be extended to the first day on which the House shall sit after the recess 539

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RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

COMMERCIAL.

No. 2. (1903)—Correspondence respecting the ratification of the Sugar Convention, signed at Brussels, 5th March, 1902.

No. 3. (1903)—List of countries engaged in the production of sugar, together with value of exports from the United Kingdom to each of the said countries, for each of the last five years, etc. 539

PORT NESS HARBOUR (ISLAND OF LEWIS).—Correspondence and Report of Mr. William Shield, M.I.C.E., P.R.S.E., in regard to the condition of the harbour of Port Ness, Island of Lewis 540

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (SCOTLAND).—Eighth Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Scotland, 1902. Presented [by Command], and ordered to lie on the Table 540

POLLING DISTRICTS.

County Borough of Huddersfield.—Order made by the council of the county borough of Huddersfield, altering certain polling districts in the borough.

Borough of Reading.—Order made by the council of the borough of Reading, altering certain polling districts in the borough 540

METROPOLITAN CATTLE MARKET.—Account of moneys received and paid by the Chamberlain of the City of London for the year 1902; also an account of extraordinary works executed, other than general repairs, for the same period. Laid before the House (Pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 540

SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM.—Statement of the funds, January 5th, 1903. Delivered (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 540

DECLARATION OF THE SOVEREIGN AGAINST TRANSUBSTANTIATION.—Petition for abrogation of; of Roman Catholics signing; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 540

Lunacy Acts Amendments (London) Bill [H.L.].

Earl Carrington 540

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 1ª."—(*Earl Carrington.*)

The Lord Chancellor (*The Earl of Halsbury*) 541

On Question, agreed to; Bill read 1ª; and to be printed.

Land Registers (Scotland) Bill [H.L.]—[SECOND READING.]—Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

The Secretary for Scotland (*Lord Balfour of Burleigh*) 541

On Question, agreed to; Bill read 2ª (according to Order), and committed to a Committee of the whole House on Thursday, 30th of April next.

THE STATE OF THE ARMY.

The Earl of Wemyss 542

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Moved, for Return showing with regard to the Army on 1st January, 1903: (1) The Establishment; (2) the number actually serving; (3) the number serving under twenty years of age, nineteen years of age, eighteen years of age, seventeen years of age, sixteen years of age and under; (4) the standard heights for different Arms; (5) the number below standard height in different Arms; (6) the standard chest measurement for different Arms; (7) the number below the standard in different Arms; (8) same returns as to Establishment, etc., applied to the Militia; (9) the number of Army Reserve in 1903 and 1902; (10) the number of Militia Reserve in 1903 and 1902, and (11) the items of expenditure in the Army Estimate 1903-4, amounting to £34,245,000, in excess of those of 1893-94, amounting to £17,631,000. —(*The Earl of Wemyss.*)

The Under Secretary of State for War (*The Earl of Hardwicke*) 543

On Question, Motion (amended by the deletion of Nos. 5 and 7) agreed to.

THE ADEN BOUNDARY.

Lord Reay 544
The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (*The Marquess of Lansdowne*) 545

HOUSE OF LORDS OFFICES.—First Report from the Select Committee considered (according to Order), and agreed to 548

Statute Law Revision (Scotland Bill) [H.L.]—A Bill for further promoting the revision of the Statute Law by repealing enactments which have ceased to be in force or have become unnecessary, was presented by the LORD CHANCELLOR; read 1ª; and to be printed. (No. 28.) 548

House adjourned at Five o'clock, to Monday, the 27th of April next, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: MONDAY, 30TH MARCH, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS.—The Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of Ways and Means .. 548

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order No. 62 has been complied with, viz.:—

Highland and Invergarry and Fort Augustus Railway Companies.
Harrow Road and Paddington Tramways Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time 549

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 63 COMPLIED WITH).—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order No. 63 has been complied with, viz.:—

Romford and District Tramways Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time 549

PRIVATE BILLS (PETITION FOR ADDITIONAL PROVISION) (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).—Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for additional Provision in the following Bill, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz. :—

Grindleford, Baslow, and Bakewell Railway Bill.

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders... 549

East Ardsley Gas Bill ; Winchester Water and Gas Bill.—As amended, considered ; to be read the third time 549

South Yorkshire Joint Railways Bill ; West Cumberland Electric Tramways Bill.—Read a second time, and committed 550

Woolwich Borough Council Bill (BY ORDER).—Read a second time, and committed 550

Nantwich Urban District Council Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time ; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 550

Burgess Hill and St. John's Common Gas Bill.—Reported, with Amendments ; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 550

Broadstairs Gas Bill.—Reported, with Amendments ; Report to lie upon the Table 550

Market Drayton Gas Bill ; Ipswich Gas Bill ; Stoke Newington Borough Council Bill ; Newcastle-upon-Tyne Electric Supply Bill.—Reported, with Amendments ; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 550

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP B).—Mr. TENNANT reported from the Committee on Group B of Private Bills ; That, at the meeting of the Committee this day, a letter was received from Mr. Osmond Williams, one of the members of the said Committee, stating that he was unable, on account of illness, to attend the Committee that day.

Report to lie upon the Table 550

Western Trust Bill [LORDS] ; Old Bridewell Burying Ground Bill [Lords] ; Plymouth and Stonehouse Gas Bill [Lords] ; Queensland Investment and Land Mortgage Bill [Lords].—Read the first time ; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 550

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act for enabling the Western Trust, Limited, to re-arrange its capital ; and to provide for the extinction of its B shares and for issuing ordinary shares in lieu thereof ; and for altering the memorandum and articles of association of the Company ; and for other purposes." [Western Trust Bill [Lords].]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for removing certain restrictions on the user of the Old Bridewell Burying Ground." [Old Bridewell Burying Ground Bill [Lords].]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confer further powers on the Plymouth and Stonehouse Gas Light and Coke Company ; and for other purposes." [Plymouth and Stonehouse Gas Bill [Lords].]

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And also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for enabling the Queensland Investment and Land Mortgage Company, Limited, to pay off capital paid in advance of calls; and for other purposes." [Queensland Investment and Land Mortgage Bill [Lords].] 550

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APPALACHARULU, BANDARN.—Petition of Bandarn Appalacharulu, for inquiry into his case; to lie upon the Table 551

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Ashton-under-Lyne; Blackburn; Brighouse; Bootle; and Derby; to lie upon the Table 551

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petition from Arbroath, in favour; to lie upon the Table 551

GROCERS' LICENCES (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petition from Glasgow, in favour; to lie upon the Table 551

LAND VALUES ASSESSMENT AND RATING BILL.—Petition from Camberwell, in favour; to lie upon the Table... 551

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.—Petitions against establishment: From Arbroath; Aberdeen; Bo'ness; Glasgow; Dysart; Kirkcaldy; and Carnoustie; to lie upon the Table 551

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.—Petitions against: From Hastings; and Chichester; to lie upon the Table 552

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.—Petition from Wolverhampton, in favour; to lie upon the Table 552

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY BOROUGH OF HUDDERSFIELD).—Copy presented, of Order made by the Council of the County Borough of Huddersfield altering certain Polling Districts in the Borough [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 552

POLLING DISTRICTS (BOROUGH OF READING).—Copy presented, of Order made by the Council of the Borough of Reading altering certain Polling Districts in the Borough [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 552

METROPOLITAN CATTLE MARKET.—Accounts presented, for the year 1902, with an account of extraordinary works executed other than the general repairs for the same period [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 552

PORT NESS HARBOUR, ISLAND OF LEWIS.—Copy presented, of Correspondence and Report of Mr. William Shield, M.I.C.E., F.R.S.E., in regard to the condition of the Harbour of Port Ness, Island of Lewis [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 552

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (SCOTLAND).—Copy presented, of Eighth Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Scotland, 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 552

EAST INDIA (PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT).—Return presented, relative thereto [Address 27th March; *Sir Seymour King*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 98.] 552

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SUGAR CONVENTION (COMMERCIAL, NO. 2, 1903).—Copy presented, of Correspondence respecting the Ratification of the Sugar Convention. Signed at Brussels, 5th March, 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 553

SUGAR-PRODUCING COUNTRIES (COMMERCIAL, NO. 3, 1903).—Copy presented, of List of Countries engaged in the Production of Sugar, together with value of Exports from the United Kingdom to each of the said Countries for each of the last five years, etc. [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

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POSTAL SERVICE AT SWINFORD.—Question, Mr. O'Kelly (Mayo, N.); Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 555

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COUNTY SLIGO POLICE FORCE.—Question, Mr. O'Dowd (Sligo, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 575

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IRISH LAND BILL.—Questions, Mr. Lambert (Devonshire, South Molton) and Mr. John Redmond (Waterford); Answers, Mr. Wyndham 580

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.—Questions, Mr. Lambert, Mr. John Redmond, Mr. Buchanan (Perthshire, E.), and Mr. Edmund Robertson (Dundee); Answers, Mr. A. J. Balfour 583

NEW MEMBER SWORN.—John Arthur Fyler, esquire, for the County of Surrey (North-Western or Chertsey Division) 585

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act for the better Prevention of Corruption." [Prevention of Corruption Bill [Lords].]... 585

Prevention of Corruption Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 126.] 585

Marine Insurance Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 127.] 585

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HOUSE OF COMMONS (KITCHEN AND REFRESHMENT ROOMS).—Ordered, that Mr. Hudson be added to the Select Committee.—(*Sir Alexander Acland-Hood.*) 585

SUPPLY [5TH ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1903–4.

1. £1,502,000, Works, Buildings, and Repairs, at Home and Abroad.

Mr. Edmund Robertson (*Dundee*) 585
The Civil Lord of the Admiralty (*Mr. Pretyman, Suffolk, Woodbridge*)... 587
Sir William Allan (*Gateshead*) 592
Sir John Colomb (*Great Yarmouth*) 593
Mr. Buchanan (*Perthshire, E.*) 595
General Laurie (*Pembroke and Haverfordwest*) 598
Sir John Gorst (*Cambridge University*) 599
Sir Arthur Hayter (*Walsall*) 600
Mr. Pretyman 601
Mr. Lough (*Islington, W.*) 607
Mr. Pretyman 607

Vote agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £2,292,500, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the expense of victualling and clothing for the Navy, including the cost of victualling establishments at home and abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

Mr. Kearley (*Devonport*) 608

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £2,292,400, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Kearley.*)

Sir Charles Dilke 618
The Secretary to the Admiralty (*Mr. Arnold-Forster, Belfast, W.*) ... 620
Sir James Joicey (*Durham, Chester-le-Street*) 626
Mr. John Burns (*Battersea*) 627
Sir John Colomb 630
Mr. Arnold-Forster 631
Mr. Edmund Robertson 633
Mr. Kearley 633

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original question again proposed.

Captain Norton (*Newington, W.*) 633

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum not exceeding £2,292,400 be granted for the said Service."—(*Captain Norton.*)

Mr. John Burns 635
Mr. Kearley 635
Mr. Pretyman 635
Mr. Sydney Buxton (*Tower Hamlets, Poplar*) 635
Capt. Norton 636

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 76; Noes, 171. (Division List, No. 46.)

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow.

Committee to sit again this evening.

EVENING SITTING.

SUPPLY [5TH ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1903–4.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £4,820,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge for the Supply and Repair of Warlike and other Stores, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

Col. Legge (*St. George's, Hanover Square*)... 640
Sir Arthur Hayter (*Walsall*) 641
Gen. Laurie (*Pembroke and Haverfordwest*) 642
The Financial Secretary to the War Office (*Lord Stanley, Lancashire, Westhoughton*) 642
Mr. Charles Hobhouse (*Bristol, E.*) 644
Major Rasch (*Essex, Chelmsford*) 645
Mr. Courtenay Warner (*Staffordshire, Lichfield*)... 646
Sir John Colomb (*Great Yarmouth*) 647
Mr. Soares (*Devonshire, Barnstaple*) 648
Mr. Llewellyn (*Somersetshire, N.*)... 649
Mr. Whitley (*Halifax*) 649
The Secretary of State for War (*Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford*) ... 649
Sir Charles Dilke 652
Mr. Brodrick 653
Mr. Charles Hobhouse 655
Mr. Courtenay Warner 658

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £4,819,900, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Courtenay Warner.*)

Mr. Whitley 658
Lord Alwyne Compton (*Bedfordshire, Biggleswade*) 658
Mr. Courtenay Warner 658
Major Seely (*Isle of Wight*) 658

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Sir Charles Dilke 659
Mr. Brodrick 659
Lord Hugh Cecil (Greenwich) 660
Mr. Brodrick 661
Sir Philip Muntz (Warwickshire, Tamworth) 662
Mr. Beckett (Yorkshire, N.R., Whitby) 662

Question put.

Committee divided :—Ayes, 51 ; Noes, 129. (Division List No. 47.)

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. Charles Hobhouse 665

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £4,810,800, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Charles Hobhouse.*)

Lord Stanley 667
Mr. Beckett 668
Mr. Whitley 669
Mr. Brodrick 669

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

2. £1,745,000, Pensions and other Non-Effective Charges for Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, Men, and others.

3. £195,000, Civil Superannuation, Compensation, Compassionate Allowances and Gratuities.

Resolutions to be reported.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £530,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge for the Pay, etc., of the Medical Establishment, and for Medicines, etc., which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

Lord Hugh Cecil 670
Lord Stanley 670

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Dr. Farquharson.*)

Question put, and agreed to.

The Clerk at the Table informed the House that Mr. Speaker was unable, owing to indisposition, to resume the Chair.

Whereupon Mr. Jeffreys, the Deputy-Chairman, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker in pursuance of Standing Order No. 1.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow ; Committee also report Progress ; to sit again To-morrow.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn"—(*Sir Alexander Acland-Hood*).

Question put, and agreed to.

Adjourned at five minutes before Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: TUESDAY, 31st MARCH, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.—The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker owing to indisposition, and of the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of Ways and Means.

Whereupon Mr. JEFFREY'S, the Deputy-Chairman, proceeded to the Table and, after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order 673

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Great Northern and City Railway Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 673

STANDING ORDERS.—Resolutions reported from the Select Committee:—

1. "That, in the case of the Maidstone Gas Bill, Petition for additional Provision, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with; that the parties be permitted to introduce their additional Provision if the Committee on the Bill think fit."

2. "That, in the case of the Baker Street and Waterloo Railway (Extension of Time) Petition, for leave to deposit a Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with; that the parties be permitted to deposit their Petition for a Bill."

3. "That, in the case of the Jewish Colonisation Association Bill [Lords], the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with; that the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill."

4. "That, in the case of the Birmingham District Tramways Bill [Lords], the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with; that the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill, provided that the powers to Construct Tramways Nos. 1, 1A, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 be struck out of the Bill, unless the consent of the County Councils of Warwickshire and Worcestershire be proved before the Committee on the Bill; that the Committee on the Bill do report how far such Order has been complied with."

Resolutions agreed to 673

Great Central Railway Bill; Watford and Edgware Railway Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 674

PETITIONS.

BANKRUPTCY LAW AMENDMENT BILL.—Petition from Halifax, in favour; to lie upon the Table 674

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.—Petition from Dublin, for alteration; to lie upon the Table 674

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Hedon; Peterborough; Exeter; York; Wolverhampton; Middlesbrough; Tynemouth; Halifax; Glossop; Preston; Bradford; and Leicester; to lie upon the Table 674

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petition from Dallas, in favour; to lie upon the Table... 674

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EDUCATION IN THE METROPOLIS.—Petitions for legislation: From Camberwell; and London; to lie upon the Table 674

INNKEEPERS' LIABILITY BILL.—Petition of the British Temperance League, in favour; to lie upon the Table... 674

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—Petition from Kirkcudbright, for alteration; to lie upon the Table 674

PUBLIC HOUSES (HOURS OF CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petition from Glasgow, in favour; to lie upon the Table 674

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.—Petitions against: From Middlesbrough; Settle; Benwell and Fenham; and Ryton; to lie upon the Table 675

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.—Petitions against Establishment: From Strathpeffer; Kilmarnock; Thornhill; Forres; Alva; Huntly; and Linlithgow; to lie upon the Table 675

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.—Petitions against: From Melton Mowbray (two); Sheffield; Deptford; Portsmouth; Southend; Barry Dock; Peckham; Clacton-on-Sea; Cardiff; Chelmsford; Birmingham (two); Bethnal Green; Brixton; Loughborough; Stoke Newington (three); Lavender Hill; Herne Bay; Canterbury; Hammersmith; Mexborough; Cheltenham; Boston; Chelsea; Bristol (three); Eastville; Ilkeston; Kingswood; Bedminster; Victoria Dock; Custom House; Stratford; Walthamstow; Shepherd's Bush; Gainsborough; Harringay; Edmonton; High Wycombe; Alfreton; Tottenham; Queen's Park; Faversham; Edmonton Green; Leyton; Basingstoke; West Green; and Leicester; to lie upon the Table 675

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Pontypool; Wandsworth; Seaford; Leek; Godmanchester; Newcastle-under-Lyme; and Heywood; to lie upon the Table... 675

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TREATY SERIES (No. 4, 1903).—Copy presented, of Convention between the United Kingdom and the United States of America for the adjustment of the boundary between the Dominion of Canada and the territory of Alaska. Signed at Washington, 24th January, 1903. Ratifications exchanged at Washington, 3rd March, 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table ... 675

RAILWAYS ABANDONMENT.—Copy presented, of Report by the Board of Trade respecting the Humber Commercial Railway and Dock Bill and the objects thereof [pursuant to Standing Order No. 158A]; referred to the Committee on the Bill 675

ILLICIT DISTILLATION.—Return ordered, "by Districts and Counties for the years ended 31st March, 1900, 1901, and 1902, respectively, showing the number of seizures and detections of illicit plant, materials, etc., in Ireland by members of the Royal Irish Constabulary; the number of persons prosecuted; the number convicted; the number committed to prison; the amount of fines imposed; the amount of fines recovered; and the amount of rewards paid to members of the Royal Irish Constabulary; also similar information as to seizures and detections by Inland Revenue Officers in England, Scotland, and Ireland during the same periods."—(*Mr. O'Mara.*) 676

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ARMY EXPENDITURE.—Address for "Return showing, approximately, the classification of Army Expenditure provided for in the current Estimates (1903–4), excluding non-effective charges, under the following heads and sub-heads: I. on provision for field services (a) available for Imperial and general service, (b) for Home service only; II. on provision for fortress service (c) Abroad, (d) at Home; and III. on provision for aquatic and submarine services."—(*Sir John Colomb.*) 676

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY—SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE.—Question, Lord Balcarres (Lancashire, Chorley); Answer, Mr. Ritchie 676

WIRELESS TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION BETWEEN DOVER AND THE EAST GOODWIN LIGHTSHIP.—Question, Mr. Doughty (Great Grimsby); Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 677

WRECKS OFF THE IRISH COAST.—Question, Mr. Nannetti (Dublin, College Green); Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 677

OPENING OF PICTURE GALLERIES ON SUNDAYS.—Question, Mr. Ashton (Bedfordshire, Luton); Answer, Mr. Hayes Fisher 677

IMPROVED POSTAL FACILITIES IN ESSEX.—Question, Mr. J. A. Pease (Essex, Saffron Walden); Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 678

FRENCH FISHING BOATS OFF THE CORNISH COAST.—Question, Mr. Hain (Cornwall, St. Ives); Answer, Lord Cranborne 678

IRISH NATIONAL EDUCATION—RESOLUTION OF CATHOLIC MANAGERS.—Question, Mr. T. M. Healy (Louth, N.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 679

DELAY IN ERECTION OF LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN COUNTY ARMAGH.—Question, Mr. John Campbell (Armagh, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 680

R.A.M.C.—ALLOWANCES TO OFFICERS UNDERGOING PROFESSIONAL COURSE.—Question, Dr. Thompson (Monaghan, N.); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 680

ESTABLISHED RANK FOR GUN WHARF EMPLOYEES.—Question, Mr. Reginald Lucas (Portsmouth); Answer, Mr. Brodrick... 681

CRIMEAN AND INDIAN MUTINY PENSIONERS.—Question, Sir John Leng (Dundee); Answer, Lord Stanley 681

ROYAL COMMISSION ON VOLUNTEER SERVICE—REPRESENTATION OF VOLUNTEER MEDICAL OFFICERS.—Question, Mr. Remnant (Finsbury, Holborn); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 682

METROPOLITAN ASYLUMS BOARD—TREATMENT OF IMBECILE CHILDREN.—Question, Mr. Remnant; Answer, Mr. Walter Long 682

LOCAL EDUCATION SCHEMES—SUGGESTIONS BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.—Question, Mr. Humphreys-Owen (Montgomeryshire); Answer, Sir William Anson 683

BOARD OF EDUCATION, TYPEWRITING DEPARTMENT—AGE OF SUPERINTENDENT.—Question, Mr. Toulmin (Lancashire, Bury); Answer, Sir William Anson 683

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

VOLUNTEER ARTILLERY ARMAMENTS.—Questions, Mr. Broadhurst (Leicester), Mr. Seymour Ormsby-Gore (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough); Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford) 683

ARMY EXPENDITURE.—Question, Sir John Colomb (Great Yarmouth); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 684

SERVICE IN THE ARMY.—Question, Col. Welby (Taunton); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 685

AGE OF TROOP HORSES.—Question, Col. Welby; Answer, Mr. Brodrick ... 685

ROYAL GARRISON REGIMENT AND THE RECRUITING RETURNS.—Question, Lieut.-General Laurie (Pembroke and Haverfordwest); Answer, Mr. Brodrick ... 685

ARMY DISCIPLINE ON ACTIVE SERVICE.—Question, Lieut.-General Laurie; Answer, Mr. Brodrick 686

DUBLIN FUSILIERS—PRIVATE MEEHAN'S CASE.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell (Longford, N.); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 686

2ND BATTALION KING'S OWN ROYAL LANCASTER REGIMENT.—Question, Lieut.-General Laurie; Answer, Mr. Brodrick 687

WATER TUBE BOILER ROYALTIES.—Question, Sir William Allan (Gateshead); Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Arnold-Forster, Belfast, W.) 687

TAXATION ON SOUTH AFRICAN NATIVES.—Question, Mr. Herbert Samuel (Yorkshire, Cleveland); Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. J. Chamberlain, Birmingham, W.) 688

LENDY ESTATE, RHODESIA.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell; Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 688

BUTTER ADULTERATION.—Question, Mr. Soares (Devonshire, Barnstaple); Answer, The President of the Board of Agriculture (Mr. Hanbury, Preston) 688

EDUCATION ACT.—Question, Mr. Elliot, (Durham); Answer, The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education (Sir William Anson, Oxford University) 689

LEHUD HARBOUR, COUNTY KERRY.—Question, Mr. Boland (Kerry, S.); Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Wyndham, Dover)... ... 690

IRELAND—INDUSTRIES AT SNEEM.—Question, Mr. Rowland; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 690

IRISH CRIMES ACT DISQUALIFICATIONS.—Questions, Mr. J. P. Farrell and Mr. Cullinan (Tipperary, S.); Answers, Mr. Wyndham 690

LAND PURCHASE AT RATHCLINE.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 691

IRISH LAND BILL.—Question, Mr. T. W. Russell (Tyrone, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 692

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.—Questions, Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice (Wiltshire, Cricklade), and Col. Welby; Answers, The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 692

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Selection (Standing Committees).

Mr. Halsey reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had added to the Standing Committee on Law and Courts of Justice and Legal Procedure the following fifteen members in respect of the County Councils (Bills in Parliament) Bill: Mr. Brigg, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Caldwell, Mr. Jesse Collings, Mr. Shepherd Cross, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Joseph Howard, Mr. Grant Lawson, Mr. Llewellyn, Mr. Walter Long, Mr. Peel, Colonel Sackville, Sir Edward Strachey, Mr. Tomkinson, and Mr. John Wilson (Durham).

Mr. Halsey further reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had added to the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures, the following fifteen members in respect of the Employment of Children Bill: Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas, Mr. Asquith, Sir George Bartley, Mr. Broadhurst, Sir Walter Foster, Sir John Gorst, Mr. Gray, Mr. T. M. Healy, Sir John Leng, Dr. Macnamara, Mr. Pirie, Sir Francis Powell, Mr. Crawford Smith, Mr. Parker Smith, and Mr. Spear.

Mr. Halsey further reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged the following Member from the Parliamentary Panel of this House to act as Commissioners in pursuance of the provisions of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899: Mr. Abel Smith; and had appointed in substitution: Sir John Tuke.

Report to lie upon the Table 693

NEW BILLS.

Prevention of Cruelty to Wild Animals Bill.—"To provide for the Prevention of Cruelty to Wild Animals," presented by Mr. Corrie Grant; supported by Dr. Shipman; to be read a second time upon Thursday, and to be printed. [Bill 129.] 694

Fisheries (Ireland) Acts Amendment Bill.—"To amend the law relating to Fisheries in Ireland, and for the better protection thereof," presented by Sir Henry Seton-Karr; supported by Sir William Tomlinson, Colonel Saunderson, Mr. Atherley-Jones, Colonel Nolan, and Mr. Yerburgh; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 26th May, and to be printed. [Bill 130.] 694

Coal Mines (Certificates) Bill.—"To amend the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887," presented by Mr. Samuel Evans; supported by Mr. Burt, Sir James Joicey, Sir William Tomlinson, Sir Alfred Thomas, and Mr. Abraham (Rhondda); to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 21st April, and to be printed. [Bill 131.] 694

Innkeepers' Liability Bill.—Reported, with Amendments, from the Standing Committee on Trade, etc.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 99.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 99.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration upon Friday, 12th June, and to be printed. [Bill 128.] ... 694

Ireland Development Grant (Consolidated Fund).—Committee to consider of authorising the payment out of the Consolidated Fund of a Grant for the development of Ireland (King's Recommendation signified), to-morrow.—(*Mr. Wyndham.*)... 695

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—[REPORTS OF MONEY COMMITTEES].

The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 695
Mr. John Ellis (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe) 695

Ordered, that the Proceedings on the Reports of the Committee of Ways and Means and other Committees authorising the Expenditure of Public Money may be entered upon at any hour after midnight though opposed, and shall not be interrupted under the Standing Order (Sittings of the House).—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

Sale of Adulterated Butter Bill.—[SECOND READING.]—Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Kearley (Devonport) 696
Mr. Lough (Islington, W.) 701

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Mr. Kearley*).

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Mr. O'Shaughnessy (Limerick, W.) 704
Mr. T. W. Russell (Tyrone, S.) 709
Mr. J. P. Farrell (Longford, N.) 711
Sir Walter Foster (Derbyshire, Ilkeston) 712
Mr. Henry Hobhouse (Somersetshire, E.) 714
Mr. Flynn (Cork, N.) 715
The President of the Board of Agriculture (Mr. Hanbury, Preston) ... 715
Sir Edward Strachey (Somersetshire, S.) 719
Mr. Bond (Nottingham, E.) 720
Mr. Cullinan (Tipperary, S.) 721
Mr. McGovern (Cavan, W.) 722
Mr. George Whiteley (Yorkshire, W.R., Pudsey) 723
Sir Joseph Dimsdale (London) 724
Mr. Lundon (Limerick, E.) 725
Mr. Gilhooly (Cork County, W.) 728
Mr. Dalziel (Kirkcaldy Burghs) 729
Mr. Heywood Johnstone (Sussex, Horsham) 730
Mr. Brigg (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley) 731
Mr. William Redmond (Clare, E.) 731
Mr. Stevenson (Suffolk, Eye) 731
Mr. O'Mara (Kilkenny, S.) 732
Mr. O'Malley (Galway, Connemara) 732

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the Bill be Committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc.—(*Mr. Hanbury.*)

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Mr. T. W. Russell 733
Sir Edward Strachey 733
Mr. O'Mara 733
Mr. McGovern 733
Mr. Dalziel 734

Committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc.

The Sheep Scab Bill.—[Second Reading.]

Mr. Dalziel 734
Mr. Hanbury 734

Bill read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc.

Contracts (India Office) Bill.—[Second Reading.]

The Secretary of State for India (*Lord George Hamilton, Middlesex, Ealing*) 734

Bill read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

Berwickshire County Town Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. Henry Hobhouse (Somersetshire, E.) in the Chair.]

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2.

Mr. Dalziel (*Kirkcaldy Burghs*) 735
The Solicitor-General for Scotland (*Mr. Scott-Dickson, Glasgow, Bridgton*) 735
Mr. Caldwell (*Lanarkshire, Mid*) 735

Bill considered in Committee, and reported without Amendment; read a third time, and passed.

Naval Forces Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee).

[Mr. Henry Hobhouse in the Chair.]

Clause 1.

Sir Charles Dilke (*Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean*) 735

Clauses 1, 2, and 3 agreed to.

Clause 4.

Sir Charles Dilke 736
The Secretary to the Admiralty (*Mr. Arnold-Forster, Belfast, W.*) ... 736

Clauses, 4, 5, and 6 agreed to.

Mr. Caldwell 737

Moved, to insert the following new clause :—

> "All regulations made in pursuance of this Act shall be laid before Parliament as soon as practicable after they are made, if Parliament be then sitting, and, if Parliament be not sitting, as soon as practicable after the beginning of the next session of Parliament."—(*Mr. Caldwell.*)

Mr. Arnold-Forster 737
Sir Charles Dilke 738

Motion made, and Question put, "That the clause be read a second time."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 76; Noes, 190. (Division List No. 48.)

Bill reported, without Amendment; to be read the third time to-morrow.

SUPPLY [26TH MARCH, AFTERNOON SITTING]—REPORT.

Resolution Reported.

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1903–4.

"That a sum, not exceeding £1,920,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the charge for the staff for Engineer services, and expenditure for Royal Engineer works, buildings, and repairs, at home and abroad (including purchases), which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

Resolution agreed to 740

SUPPLY [26TH MARCH, EVENING SITTING]—REPORT.

Resolutions reported.

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1903–4.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £1,186,300, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expenses of Naval and Marine Pensions, Gratuities, and Compassionate Allowances, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £259,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expenses of Medical Services, including the cost of Medical Establishments at Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

3. "That a sum, not exceeding £15,500, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Martial Law, including the Cost of Naval Prisons at Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

Resolutions agreed to 741

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SUPPLY [30TH MARCH, AFTERNOON SITTING]—REPORT.

Resolutions reported.

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1903–4.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £1,502,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Works, Buildings, and Repairs, at Home and Abroad, including the cost of Superintendence, Purchase of Sites, Grants in Aid, and other charges connected therewith, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."
2. "That a sum, not exceeding £2,292,500, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Victualling and Clothing for the Navy, including the cost of Victualling Establishments at Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

Resolutions agreed to 741

SUPPLY [30TH MARCH, EVENING SITTING]—REPORT.

Resolutions reported.

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1903–4.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £4,820,030, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge for the Supply and Repair of Warlike and other Stores, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."
2. "That a sum, not exceeding £1,745,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge for Chelsea and Kilmainham Hospitals, and the In-Pensioners thereof; for Out-Pensions; for the Maintenance of Lunatics for whom Pensions are not drawn; for Gratuities awarded in Commutation and in lieu of Pensions; for Rewards for Meritorious Services; for Victoria Cross Pensions; and for Pensions, etc., to the Widows and Children of Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and Men, etc., which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."
3. "That a sum, not exceeding £195,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge for Civil Superannuation, Compensation and Compassionate Allowances, and Gratuities, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

Resolutions agreed to 742

And, there being no further business set down for the Afternoon Sitting, Mr. Deputy-Speaker left the Chair till this Evening's Sitting.

EVENING SITTING.

Baker Street and Waterloo Railway (Transfer) Bill—[BY ORDER].—[SECOND READING.]—Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Kimber (Wandsworth)... 743
Mr. Claude Hay (Shoreditch, Hoxton) 743

Amendment proposed—

> "To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Mr. Claude Hay.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Mr. Perks (*Lincolnshire, Louth*) ... 743

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill.—[By Order.]

Sir Frederick Banbury (*Camberwell, Peckham*) ... 743
Mr. Cohen (*Islington, E.*) ... 746

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill to omit Tramway No. 7."—(*Sir Frederick Banbury.*)

Mr. Cumming Macdona (*Southwark, Rotherhithe*) ... 747
Mr. Whitmore (*Chelsea*) ... 747
Sir J. Blundell Maple (*Camberwell, Dulwich*) ... 748
Mr. John Burns (*Battersea*) ... 748
The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade (*Mr. Bonar Law, Glasgow, Blackfriars*) ... 751
Sir William Tomlinson (*Preston*) ... 753
Mr. Burdett-Coutts (*Westminster*) ... 754
Sir George Bartley (*Islington, N.*) ... 757
Mr. Thornton (*Clapham*) ... 757
Mr. Claude Hay (*Shoreditch, Hoxton*) ... 758
Mr. Henry Hobhouse (*Somersetshire, E.*) ... 759
Col. Pilkington (*Lancashire, Newton*) ... 760

Question put.

House divided:—Ayes, 134; Noes, 133. (Division List No. 49.)

LABOUR REPRESENTATION.

Mr. Crooks (*Woolwich*) ... 761
Mr. Broadhurst (*Leicester*) ... 766

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable and expedient that, in order to give constituencies a full and free choice in the selection of Parliamentary candidates, the charges now made by the returning officer to the candidates should be chargeable to public funds, and that all Members of the House of Commons should receive from the State a reasonable stipend during their Parliamentary life."—(*Mr. Crooks.*)

Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (*Stirling Burghs*) ... 770
The Under Secretary of State for India (*Earl Percy, Kensington, S.*) ... 772
Sir William Tomlinson (*Preston*) ... 776

And, it being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed to-morrow.

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IMPERIAL REVENUE (COLLECTION AND EXPENDITURE) (GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND).—Return ordered, "relating to Imperial Revenue (Collection and Expenditure) (Great Britain and Ireland) for the year ending the 31st day of March, 1903 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 285, of Session 1902)."—(*Mr. Joseph Albert Pease.*) 776

Salmon Fisheries (Ireland) Acts Amendment Bill.—Order for Second Reading read, and discharged 776

Bill withdrawn.

Adjourned at five minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: WEDNESDAY, 1ST APRIL, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS.—The Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of Ways and Means ... 777

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Bath Corporation Water Bill; Bridgwater Gas Bill; as amended, considered; to be read a third time 777

Sutton District Water Bill; Walker and Wallsend Union Gas Bill.—Reported with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table 777

City and South London Railway Bill.—Reported with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 777

PETITIONS.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Penryn; Shrewsbury; and Great Yarmouth; to lie upon the Table ... 777

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Banff; Peterhead; and Elgin; to lie upon the Table 777

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.—Petitions against: From Rawmarsh; and Shifnal; to lie upon the Table 777

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.—Petitions against establishment: From Fraserburgh and Mid Calder; to lie upon the Table 777

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.—Petitions against: From Peterborough; Bath; Worcester (two); Maidstone; Bridgwater; North Camberwell; Streatham; Wandsworth; Staines; Sheffield (two); Kentish Town; Torquay; Birmingham; Hednesford; Brentford; Bristol; Southampton; Nottingham; Woolwich; Plumstead; Manchester; Aldershot; Tunbridge Wells; and Tonbridge; to lie upon the Table 777

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Birmingham; and Swindon; to lie upon the Table 778

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY IN MONMOUTHSHIRE.—Four Petitions from Ebbw Vale, for prohibition; to lie upon the Table.... ... 778

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS (RENEWAL OF LICENCES).—Petition from Great Yarmouth, for legislation; to lie upon the Table 778

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RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

WINES IMPORTED.—Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 17th March; *Sir Thomas Dewar*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 100.] ... 778

GOVERNMENT INSURANCES AND ANNUITIES.—Account presented, of all moneys received and of the disposal thereof, and of all contracts for the grant of deferred life annuities and for payments on death made during the year 1902 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 101.] ... 778

RUSSIA (NEW GENERAL CUSTOMS TARIFF).—Copy presented, of translation of the New General Customs Tariff for the European frontiers of Russia, with comparison, as far as possible, of the rates of Customs Duty contained in the tariff with the rates at present in force on imports into European Russia from the United Kingdom [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 778

CHARITY COMMISSION (ENGLAND AND WALES).—Copy presented, of Fiftieth Report of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 778

LEAD POISONING IN EARTHENWARE AND CHINA WORKS.—Return presented, relative thereto [Address 5th March; *Mr. Cochrane*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 102.] 778

CREMATION (ENGLAND AND WALES).—Copy presented, of Regulations made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department under Section 7 of the Cremation Act, 1902, with reference to the maintenance and inspection of crematoria, the condition under which cremations may take place, etc. [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 779

POLICE (SCOTLAND).—Copy presented, of Forty-Fifth Annual Report of His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland for the year ended 31st December, 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 779

EAST INDIA (LOANS RAISED IN ENGLAND).—Copy presented, of Return of all Loans raised in England, chargeable on the revenues of India, outstanding at the commencement of the half year ending on the 31st March, 1903 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 103.] 780

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS SECURITIES.—Return ordered, "of the amounts of British Government Securities held by the several Government Departments and other public offices on the 31st day of March, 1903, specifying whether held in England or Ireland" (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 192, of Session 1902):—

						Other Securities.		
£2¾ per Cent. Consols.	£2¾ per Cents. (1905).	£2½ per Cents.	Local Loans £3 per Cent. Stock.	£2¾ per Cent. Guaranteed Land Stock.	£2¾ per Cent. War Loan,	Annuities for Terms of Years.	Exchequer Bonds and Treasury Bills.	Local Loans Bonds.

—*Mr. Hayes Fisher* 780

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

ESTABLISHED RANK FOR GUN WHARF EMPLOYEES.—Question, Mr. Reginald Lucas (Portsmouth); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 779

IRISH GOLD ORNAMENTS.—Question, Sir Thomas Esmonde (Wexford, N.); Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 780

COST OF ARMY DEPOTS.—Question, Mr. Arthur Lee (Hampshire, Fareham); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 781

IRISH NATIONAL EDUCATION—ERECTION OF NEW SCHOOLS.—Question, Mr. MacVeagh (Down, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 781

LAW OFFICERS' FEES.—Question, Mr. Lambert (Devonshire, South Molton); Answer, Mr. Hayes Fisher 782

FRONTIER MEDAL FOR TROOPS ENGAGED IN THE MEKRAN AND PERSO-BELUCHISTAN EXPEDITION.—Question, Sir Seymour King (Hull, Central); Answer, Lord George Hamilton... 782

TELEGRAPHIC FACILITIES IN COUNTY CAVAN.—Question, Mr. M'Govern (Cavan, W.); Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 783

EDUCATION ACT.—Question, Mr. Humphreys-Owen (Montgomeryshire); Answer, Sir William Anson 783

REPORT OF CORRUPTION AT SHREWSBURY.—Question, Mr. Humphreys-Owen; Answer, Sir Robert Finlay 783

IRISH LAND BILL—SALES ON THE CUSACK ESTATE.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell (Longford, N.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 783

RELEASE OF JOHN MULLIGAN.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 784

DELAY IN ERECTION OF LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN COUNTY LIMERICK.—Question, Mr. O'Shaughnessy (Limerick, W.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 784

ROYAL ENGINEERS—COMPULSORY VACCINATION OF CIVIL STAFF.—Questions, Mr. Keir Hardie (Merthyr Tydvil), and Mr. Runciman (Dewsbury); Answers, Mr. Brodrick... 784

MILITARY DRILL IN SCHOOLS.—Question, Mr. John Ellis (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 785

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

ARMY STANDARDS.—Question, Mr. Charles Hobhouse (Bristol, E.); Answer, The Financial Secretary to the War Office (Lord Stanley, Lancashire, Westhoughton).... 786

THE LATE SIR HECTOR MACDONALD.—Questions, Major Rasch (Essex, Chelmsford); Answers, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. J. Chamberlain, Birmingham, W.)... 786

INCOME TAX.—Question, Mr. Boland (Kerry, S.); Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir M. Hicks-Beach, Bristol, W.) 787

CRIME AND CREMATION.—Question, Mr. John Ellis (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Akers Douglas, Kent, St. Augustine's) 787

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WHITAKER WRIGHT—EXTRADITION PROCEEDINGS.—Question, Mr. Lambert (Devonshire, South Molton); Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas 788

COMPULSORY OVERTIME IN THE CENTRAL TELEGRAHIC OFFICE.—Question, Mr. Patrick O'Brien (Kilkenny); Answer, The Postmaster-General (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.) 788

EDUCATION SCHEMES.—Question, Mr. John Ellis; Answer, The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education (Sir William Anson, Oxford University) 789

SCOTTISH EDUCATION GENERAL AID GRANT.—Question, Mr. Buchanan (Perthshire, E.); Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. A. Graham Murray, Buteshire) 789

IRISH LAND PURCHASE.—Question, Mr. George Faber (York); Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Wyndham, Dover)... 790

RURAL LIBRARIES IN IRELAND.—Question, Mr. Boland; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 791

IRISH EQUIVALENT GRANTS.—Question, Mr. Patrick O'Brien; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 791

IRISH JUDICIARY.—Questions, Mr. Patrick O'Brien; Answers, Mr. Wyndham... 791

CAPITATION GRANTS FOR IRISH EVENING SCHOOLS.—Question, Mr. Murphy (Kerry, E.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 793

LIMERICK TELEGRAPHISTS' GRIEVANCES.—Question, Mr. Joyce (Limerick); Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 793

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.—Question, Mr. Lambert; Answer, The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 793

Hall Marking of Foreign Plate Bill.—Order for Second Reading upon Friday, read, and discharged 794

Bill withdrawn.

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.—Second Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 794

MUNICIPAL TRADING.—Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Question [4th March], "That it is expedient that a Select Committee of this House be appointed to join with a Committee of the Lords to consider and report as to the principles which should govern powers given by Bills and Provisional Orders to municipal and other local authorities for industrial enterprise within or without the area of their jurisdiction."—(*Mr. Balfour.*)

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

Mr. John Burns (Battersea) 794
Mr. Cohen (Islington, E.) 799
Mr. Whitley (Halifax) 803

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Amendment proposed—

"At the end of the Question, to add the words 'and which of such powers should be conferred by a general Local Government Act.'" —(*Mr. Whitley.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. Galloway (*Manchester, S.W.*)... 807
Sir Edward Grey (*Northumberland, Berwick*) 809
The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (*Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.*)... 810

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 103 ; Noes, 178. (Division List No. 50.)

Main Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 187 ; Noes, 107. (Division List No. 51.)

Resolved, That it is expedient that a Select Committee of this House be appointed to join with a Committee of the Lords to consider and report as to the principles which should govern powers given by Bills and Provisional Orders to municipal and other local authorities for industrial enterprise within or without the area of their jurisdiction.

Message to the Lords to communicate this Resolution, and desire their concurrence.—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

IRELAND DEVELOPMENT GRANT [CONSOLIDATED FUND].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of the Consolidated Fund, of an annual sum not exceeding £185,000 for providing a special grant to be used for the purposes of the Development of Ireland."

The Chief Secretary for Ireland (*Mr. Wyndham, Dover*) 823
Mr. John Redmond (*Waterford*) 829
Mr. Gibson Bowles (*Lynn Regis*) 834
Sir William Harcourt (*Monmouthshire, W.*) 836
Mr. Wyndham 837
Mr. Blake (*Longford, S.*) 838
Mr. T. W. Russell (*Tyrone, S.*) 840
Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (*Stirling Burghs*) 840
Mr. Wyndham 843
Sir Henry Fowler (*Wolverhampton, E.*) 844
Mr. John Redmond 845
Col. Nolan (*Galway, N.*) 845
Mr. Caldwell (*Lanarkshire, Mid*) 846

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of the Consolidated Fund, of an annual sum not exceeding £185,000 for providing a special grant to be used for the purposes of the Development of Ireland.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow.

Army (Annual) Bill.—[SECOND READING.]

Sir Charles Dilke (*Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean*) 847
Col. Welby (*Taunton*) 848
The Secretary of State for War (*Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford*) ... 850
Mr. Bromley Davenport (*Cheshire, Macclesfield*) 852

Bill read a second time, and committed for To-morrow.

NATIONAL EXPENDITURE.—Ordered, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire whether any plan can be advantageously adopted for enabling the House, by Select Committee or otherwise, more effectively to make an examination, not involving criticisms of policy, into the details of National Expenditure."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*) 855

Naval Forces Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be read a third time."

Mr. Caldwell (*Lanarkshire, Mid*) 855
Mr. Gibson Bowles (*Lynn Regis*) 856
Sir Charles Dilke (*Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean*) 857
The Secretary to the Admiralty (*Mr. Arnold-Forster, Belfast, W.*) ... 858
Sir John Colomb (*Great Yarmouth*) 859

Bill read a third time, and passed.

Contracts (India Office) Bill.—Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; read the third time, and passed 861

UGANDA RAILWAY (MATERIALS).—Address for "Return giving dates of purchase and prices paid for rails, sleepers, girders, locomotives, carriages, and bridge-work obtained for the construction of and working of the Uganda Railway."—(*Mr. O'Doherty.*) 861

And, there being no further Business set down for the Afternoon Sitting, Mr. Speaker left the Chair till this Evening's Sitting.

EVENING SITTING.

EAST INDIA (PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.)

Capt. Balfour (*Middlesex, Hornsey*) 861
Sir Seymour King (*Hull, Central*) 870

Motion made, and Question put, "That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the Grievances alleged by the Senior Cooper's Hill Engineers, now belonging to the Public Works Department of India, to exist as a consequence of their promotion and emoluments falling short of the expectations held out to them when they entered the Service."—(*Captain Balfour.*)

The Under Secretary of State for India (*Earl Percy, Kensington, S.*) ... 877
Mr. Kimber (*Wandsworth*) 883

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 50; Noes, 134. (Division List No. 52.)

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).—The Committee of Selection report, That they have discharged the following Member from the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure: Mr. Solicitor-General; and have added the following Member: Mr. Attorney-General.

Report to lie upon the Table 887

Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act (1886) Amendment Bill.—[SECOND READING].—Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Weir (Ross and Cromarty) 887

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

The Lord Advocate (Mr. A. Graham Murray, Buteshire) 887

Notice taken that forty Members were not present; House counted, and forty Members not being present:—

The House was adjourned at half-past Eleven of the Clock till To-morrow.

Adjourned at half after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: THURSDAY, 2ND APRIL, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS.—The Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of Ways and Means ... 889

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz.:—

Local Government Provisional Order (Housing of the Working Classes) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time To-morrow 889

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE).—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, no Standing Orders are applicable, viz.:—

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time To-morrow 889

East Ardsley Gas Bill; Winchester Water and Gas Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 889

PETITIONS.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Bedford; and Luton; to lie upon the Table 889

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petition from Muirkirk, in favour; to lie upon the Table 890

EDUCATION IN THE METROPOLIS.—Petition from Poplar, for legislation; to lie upon the Table 890

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—Petition of the Scottish Alliance for Temperance and Social Reform, for alteration; to lie upon the Table 890

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.—Petitions against establishment: From Paisley; Forfar; Ayr; and Brechin; to lie upon the Table... ... 890

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SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.—Petitions against: From Birmingham (two); Brentwood; Barking; Leamington; North Kensington; Shrewsbury; Bedford; Sheffield; Wellingborough (two); Kingston-upon-Hull; Lambeth; Mansfield; Folkestone; East Ham; Romford; Lincoln; Bolton; and Brierley Hill; to lie upon the Table 890

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.—Petition from Asbury, in favour; to lie upon the Table 890

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).—Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 2947 to 2949 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 890

WORKHOUSE INFIRMARIES (IRELAND) (NUNS EMPLOYED).—Return ordered, "showing the number of Workhouse Infirmaries in Ireland in which nuns are employed in any capacity, showing for each Infirmary the number of nuns so employed and the amount paid to them by way of salaries within the last financial year."—(*Mr. Sloan.*) 890

TRADES DISPUTES.—Return ordered, "showing statistics of strikes and lock-outs in each of the ten years 1893–1902, in the following form:—

	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.
(1) Number and magnitude of Strikes and Lock-outs:—										
Number of Strikes and Lock-outs recorded										
Number of workpeople affected										
Aggregate duration in working days										
Average duration per head of estimated working population										
(2) Principal causes: —										
Percentage of workpeople directly affected by Strikes and Lock-outs due to the undermentioned causes:—										
Wages: For advance										
Wages: Against reduction										
Wages: Other										
Total wages										
Hours of labour: For decrease										
Hours of labour: Against increase										
Hours of labour: Other										
Total hours										
Employment of particular classes or persons										
Other causes										
Total										
(3) Results:—										
Percentage of workpeople directly affected by Disputes which resulted—										
In favour of employers										
In favour of workpeople										
In a compromise										
(4) Methods of Settlement:—										
(a) Number of Strikes and Lock-outs settled by—										
Arbitration										
Conciliation and mediation										
Mutual arrangement										
Other ways										
(b) Number of workpeople affected by Strikes and Lock-outs settled by—										
Arbitration										
Conciliation and mediation										
Mutual arrangement										
Other ways										
(5) Number of cases settled under Conciliation Act:—										
Disputes involving stoppage										
Disputes not involving stoppage										
Total										

(*Mr. Bell.*) 891

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS COMMISSION—REPORT.—Question, Mr. Field (Dublin, St. Patrick); Answer, Mr. Walter Long 891

METROPOLITAN ASYLUMS BOARD—TREATMENT OF IMBECILE CHILDREN.—Question, Mr. Flower (Bradford, W.); Answer, Mr. Walter Long... ... 892

VACCINATION ACT—EXEMPTION CERTIFICATES.—Question, Mr. Runciman (Dewsbury); Answer, Mr. Walter Long 893

TUBERCULOSIS—SEIZURE OF PIGS.—Question, Mr. Field; Answer, Mr. Walter Long 893

HOLLY MOUNT, TOTTINGTON, POOR LAW SCHOOLS.—Question, Mr. Flower; Answer, Mr. Walter Long 893

EDUCATION ACT—SCHEDULE II. (22).—Question, Mr. Henry Hobhouse (Somersetshire, E.); Answer, Mr. Walter Long 894

EDUCATION GRANTS.—Question, Mr. Gardner (Berkshire, Wokingham); Answer, Mr. Walter Long 894

POSTMARKS.—Question, Mr. Talbot (Oxford University); Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 895

ALLEGED GRIEVANCES OF WELSH SUB-POSTMASTERS.—Question, Mr. Keir Hardie (Merthyr Tydvil); Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 895

EDUCATION OF DEAF AND DUMB.—Question, Mr. Boland (Kerry, S.); Answer, Sir William Anson 896

EDUCATION ACT—PAYMENT OF GRANTS.—Question, Mr. Yoxall (Nottingham, W.); Answer, Sir William Anson 896

ACCIDENTS IN SHIPYARDS.—Question, Mr. John Wilson (Durham, Mid); Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas 897

PRISON REGULATIONS—ALIENS.—Question, Mr. Channing (Northamptonshire, E.); Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas 897

INDIA—IMPORT DUTIES ON BRITISH GOODS.—Question, Sir John Rolleston (Leicester); Answer, Lord George Hamilton 897

INDIA—TREATMENT OF RABIES.—Question, Col. Lockwood (Essex, Epping); Answer, Lord George Hamilton 898

TRANSVAAL—TAXATION OF THE MINES—REBATEMENTS.—Question, Mr. Brooke Robinson (Dudley); Answer, Mr. Ritchie 898

EDUCATION—IRISH AND SCOTCH EQUIVALENT GRANTS.—Question, Mr. O'Mara (Kilkenny, S.); Answer, Mr. Ritchie... 898

NAVAL SCHOOLMASTERS.—Question, Mr. Yoxall; Answer, Mr. Pretyman ... 899

THE "CALEDONIA" TRAINING SHIP.—Question, Mr. J. H. Lewis (Flint Boroughs); Answer, Mr. Pretyman 899

PREPARATION OF JURORS' LISTS—SCALE OF REMUNERATION.—Question, Mr. O'Malley (Galway, Connemara); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 900

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD APPOINTMENTS FOR POOR LAW OFFICERS.—Question, Mr. O'Malley; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 900

BEQUEST OF THE LATE JAMES MURPHY.—Question, Mr. William Abraham (Cork Co., N.E.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 901

IRISH LAND BILL—SUGGESTED DRAINAGE SCHEME.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell (Longford, N.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 901

BOYLE UNION—COST OF PRINTING AND ADVERTISING.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 902

IRISH VALUATION RETURNS.—Question, Mr. Buchanan (Perthshire, E.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 902

IRELAND—INQUIRIES UNDER THE LABOURERS ACTS.—Question, Mr. Gilhooly (Cork Co., W.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 903

EDUCATION—IRISH EQUIVALENT GRANTS.—Questions, Mr. Caldwell (Lanarkshire, Mid); Answers, Mr. Wyndham 903

WAR GRATUITY FOR KIMBERLEY TOWN GUARD.—Question, Lieut.-Col. George Kemp; Answer, Mr. Brodrick 904

ARMY SCHOOLS—DENOMINATIONAL TEACHING.—Question, Mr. Yoxall; Answer, Mr. Brodrick 904

ARMY CLOTHING FACTORY—FAIR WAGE RESOLUTION.—Question, Mr. Talbot; Answer, Mr. Brodrick 905

SOUTH AFRICAN WAR—COMPENSATION CLAIMS.—Question, Mr. Carvil (Newry); Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 905

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES BILL—DATE OF INTRODUCTION.—Question, Dr. Macnamara (Camberwell, N.); Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 905

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

THURSDAY ISLAND COALING STATION.—Question, Sir Charles Dilke (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean); Answer, The Financial Secretary to the War Office (Lord Stanley, Lancashire, Westhoughton) 906

RECRUITING REGULATIONS.—Question, Mr. Pirie (Aberdeen, N.); Answer, Lord Stanley 906

SOLDIERS DISCHARGED IN SOUTH AFRICA.—Question, Sir Thomas Dewar (Tower Hamlets, St. George's); Answer, Lord Stanley 907

MEDALS FOR TIENTSIN VOLUNTEERS.—Question, Mr. Yerburgh (Chester); Answer, Lord Stanley 907

FOURTH DIVISION VOLUNTEER ROYAL ENGINEERS.—Question, Mr. Yerburgh; Answer, Lord Stanley 908

PREVENTION OF ILLEGAL TRAWLING.—Question, Mr. Cathcart Wason (Orkney and Shetland); Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Arnold-Forster, Belfast, W.) 908

SUPPLEMENTARY LIEUTENANTS.—Question, Sir John Colomb (Great Yarmouth); Answer, Mr. Arnold-Forster 909

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BOER PRISONERS IN CEYLON.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell (Longford, N.); Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. J. Chamberlain, Birmingham, W.) 909

SOUTH AFRICAN TARIFFS. — Question, Mr. Lambert (Devonshire, South Molton); Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 910

COTTON CULTIVATION IN THE WEST INDIES. — Question, Mr. Runciman (Dewsbury); Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 910

TRANSVAAL AND ORANGE RIVER FINANCES.—Questions, Sir William Harcourt (Monmouthshire, W.), and Mr. Lough (Islington, W.); Answers, Mr. J. Chamberlain 910

HIGH TREASON TRIALS IN SOUTH AFRICA.—Question, Mr. McGovern (Cavan, W.); Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 911

AUSTRIAN SUGAR INDUSTRY.—Question, Mr. Lough; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Lord Cranborne, Rochester) ... 911

IMPORTED FOREIGN FLOUR.—Question, Mr. Runciman; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Ritchie, Croydon) 912

SCHOOL BOARD ACCOUNTS.—Question, Mr. Luke White (Yorkshire, E.R., Buckrose); Answer, The Secretary to the Local Government Board (Mr. Grant Lawson, Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) 913

REGULATION ACTS—GREAT SOUTHERN AND WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY AND ITS EMPLOYEES.—Question, Mr. Bell (Derby); Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Gerald Balfour, Leeds, Central) 913

SUB-POST OFFICES ON LICENSED PREMISES.—Question, Mr. Sloan (Belfast, S.); Answer, The Postmaster-General (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.) 914

LONDON POSTAL TELEPHONE SERVICE.—Question, Sir Thomas Dewar; Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 914

HAMPDEN COURT ROAD FOOTWAYS.—Question, Mr. Claude Hay (Shoreditch, Hoxton); Answer, Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes (Huntingdonshire, Ramsey) ... 915

PACIFIC CABLE.—Question, Mr. Runciman; Answer, The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Hayes Fisher, Fulham) 915

COLERAINE LABOURERS' COTTAGE SCHEME.—Question, Mr. Hunter Craig (Lanarkshire, Govan); Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Wyndham, Dover) 916

IRISH TOWNPARK TENANTS.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell (Longford, N.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 917

IRISH ASSISTANT TEACHERS.—Question, Mr. Sloan; Answer, Mr. Wyndham ... 917

IRISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUDITORS—MAJOR ECCLES.—Question, Mr. O'Mara (Kilkenny, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 918

SNEEM EVICTIONS.—Questions, Mr. Boland (Kerry, S.); Answers, Mr. Wyndham 918

WARDEN ESTATE, SNEEM.—Question, Mr. Boland; Answer, Mr. Wyndham ... 919

BROWN HALL ESTATE, COUNTY MAYO.—Question, Mr. John O'Donnell (Mayo, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 919

IRISH LAND BILL—FUTURE TENANTS AND CARETAKERS.—Question, Mr. John Redmond (Waterford); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 920

IMPRISONMENT FOR CONTEMPT OF COURT.—Question, Mr. McGovern; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 921

GLENGARIFF BURIAL GROUND.—Question, Mr. Gilhooly (Cork Co., W.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 921

WHITE ESTATE, NEAR BANTRY.—Question, Mr. Gilhooly; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 922

THE PENRHYN QUARRY DISPUTE.—Questions, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (Stirling Burghs); Answers, The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 922

Incest Bill.—Reported, with Amendments, from the Standing Committee on Law, etc.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 104.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 104.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee) to be taken into consideration upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 134.] 923

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Mr. HALSEY reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged the following members from the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures: Mr. Solicitor-General and Mr. Boland, and had appointed in substitution Mr. Attorney-General and Mr. O'Mara.

Mr. HALSEY further reported from the Committee: That they had added to the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures, the following fifteen members in respect of the Sale of Adulterated Butter Bill: Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas, Major Bagot, Mr. Bond, Earl of Dalkeith, Mr. Dalziel, Sir Joseph Dimsdale, Sir Walter Foster, Mr. Flynn, Mr. Gilhooly, Mr. Hanbury, Mr. Henry Hobhouse, Mr. Joyce, Mr. Kearley, Mr. O'Neill, and Mr. O'Shaughnessy.

Reports to lie upon the Table 923

NEW BILLS.

Burgh Police (Scotland) Bill.—"To amend the law relating to the administration of Burghs in Scotland," presented by Mr. Asher; supported by Mr. John Morley, Sir Robert Reid, Mr. Parker Smith, Mr. Robert Wallace, and Colonel Denny; to be read a second time upon Friday, 1st May, and to be printed. [Bill 135.] 923

Post Office Sites Bill.—"To enable His Majesty's Postmaster-General to acquire lands in London and Bristol for the public service, and for other purposes," presented by Mr. Austen Chamberlain; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 136.] 924

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Hall-Marking of Foreign Plate (No. 2) Bill.—"To amend the law relating to the Hall-marking of Foreign Plate," presented by Mr. Samuel Roberts; supported by Mr. Stuart-Wortley, Sir Benjamin Stone, Sir Joseph Dimsdale, and Mr. Remnant; to be read a second time to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 132.] 924

Highways Bill.—"To amend the Law for the administration of Highways," presented by Mr. Henry Hobhouse; supported by Sir John Dorington, Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice, Mr. Bill, Mr. Heywood Johnstone, and Mr. Herbert Lewis; to be read a second time upon Friday, 24th April, and to be printed. [Bill 137.] 924

SUPPLY (CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES).

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

THE HOUSING PROBLEM.

Mr. Claude Hay (Shoreditch, Hoxton) 924

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'That' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'in the opinion of this House, the administration of the Housing Acts by the Departments concerned is unsatisfactory and defective,'—instead thereof."—(*Mr. Claude Hay.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Dr. Macnamara (Camberwell, N.) 932
Mr. Middlemore (Birmingham, N.) 938
Mr. Austin Taylor (Liverpool, East Toxteth) 939
Mr. Keir Hardie (Merthyr Tydvil) 944
Sir George Bartley (Islington. N.) 945
Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice (Wiltshire, Cricklade) 946
Sir J. Dickson-Poynder (Wiltshire, Chippenham) 948
The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Walter Long, Bristol, S.) 950

Question put, and agreed to.

Original Question again proposed.

THE TRUCK ACTS.

Mr. Keir Hardie 956
The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Akers Douglas, Kent, St. Augustine's) 958

CIVIL SERVICE UPPER DIVISION.

Mr. D. A. Thomas (Merthyr Tydvil) 959
Mr. T. W. Russell (Tyrone, S.) 962
The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Hayes Fisher, Fulham) ... 962

SCOTTISH FISHERIES.

Mr. Weir (Ross and Cromarty) 965
Mr. Gibson Bowles (Lynn Regis) 967

Mr. Munro Ferguson (Leith Burghs) 968
Mr. Cathcart Wason (Orkney and Shetland) 969
The Lord Advocate (Mr. A. Graham Murray, Buteshire) 971
Sir Robert Reid (Dumfries Burghs) 973
Mr. Bignold (Wick Burghs) 974

Main Question put, and agreed to.

SUPPLY.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICE AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903–4.

To report Progress; and ask leave to sit again.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

IRELAND DEVELOPMENT GRANT [CONSOLIDATED FUND]—REPORT.

Resolution reported.

"That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of the Consolidated Fund, of an annual sum not exceeding £185,000 for providing a special grant to be used for the purposes of the Development of Ireland."

Motion made, and Question put, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

Mr. Caldwell (Lanarkshire, Mid) 976
Mr. Gibson Bowles (Lynn Regis) 977
The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Ritchie, Croydon) 969
Mr. Asquith (Fifeshire, E.) 982
The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Wyndham, Dover) 985
Sir George Bartley (Islington, N.) 986

Question put.

The House Divided:—Ayes, 193; Noes, 54. (Division List No. 53).

Bill ordered to be brought in upon the said Resolution by Mr. Wyndham, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland.

Ireland Development Grant Bill.—"To provide for a Special Grant to be used for the purposes of the Development of Ireland," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 22nd April, and to be printed. [Bill 133.]

EVENING SITTING.

Thames River Steamboat Service Bill—[BY ORDER].—[SECOND READING].—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read,

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Sir Joseph Dimsdale (London) ... 990
Mr. Bull (Hammersmith) ... 991
Sir Frederick Banbury (Camberwell, Peckham) ... 992
Mr. Brigg (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley) ... 992
Mr. John Burns (Battersea) ... 992
Mr. Cumming Macdona (Southwark, Rotherhithe) ... 995
Sir Fortescue Flannery (Yorkshire, Shipley) ... 995
Mr. Cohen (Islington, E.) ... 996

Bill read a second time, and committed.

Thames Steamboat Trust Bill.—[SECOND READING.]—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Sir Joseph Dimsdale ... 996
Sir Fortescue Flannery ... 997
Mr. John Burns ... 998

Bill read a second time, and committed.

Army (Annual) Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3—

Col. Welby (Taunton) ... 998

Amendment proposed—

"In page 3, line 5, after the first word 'the' to insert 'good and sufficient.'"

The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford) ... 999
Col. Welby ... 1000

Amendment negatived.

Clause 3 agreed to.

New Clause (Amendment of 44 and 45 Vic. c. 58, s. 4.)—(*Colonel Welby.*)

Brought up and read the first time.

Col. Welby ... 1000
Mr. Brodrick ... 1001
Sir Charles Dilke (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) ... 1001
Col. Welby ... 1003
Mr. Lawson Walton (Leeds, S.) ... 1003
Mr. Brodrick ... 1005
Sir John Colomb (Great Yarmouth) ... 1005
Major Seely (Isle of Wight) ... 1006
Sir John Fergusson (Manchester, N.E.) ... 1006

Question put: That the Clause be read a second time.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 49; Noes, 143. (Division List No. 54.)

Another New Clause (Amendment of 44 and 45 Vic. c. 58, s. 42.)—(*Col. Welby.*)

Brought up, and read the first time.

Col. Welby 1009
Mr. Brodrick 1009

Question, "That the Clause be read a second time," put and negatived.

Another New Clause (Special Enlistment).—(*Major Seely.*)

Brought up and read the first time.

Proposed new Clause—

"(1) Subject to the provisions of this section no recruit shall, after the passing of this Act, be enlisted in the Regular Forces unless he can produce a certificate of his birth to the recruiter, nor unless he is eighteen years of age.

"(2) A recruit may be enlisted without the previous production of his birth certificate if the approving officer shall be satisfied that every reasonable effort has been made to obtain such certificate, and that it is not practicable to obtain it, but in that case such officer shall state in writing what steps have been taken to obtain such certificate, and why he is of opinion that it is impracticable to obtain it.

"(3) A recruit may be enlisted who is known or believed by the approving officer to be more than seventeen, but less than eighteen years of age, if such approving officer shall be of opinion that by reason of exceptional physical health and development, such recruit will make an efficient soldier; but in that case such officer shall state in writing the height, weight, and chest measurement of such recruit, and any other circumstance which shall appear to such officer to justify the enlistment of such recruit. Every written statement made by an approving officer in pursuance of this section shall be transmitted to the Secretary of State, and a return of all such statements made in any year shall be laid before Parliament not later than the presentation of the Annual Army Estimates to the House of Commons in the year following.

"(5) This section shall be construed together with Part II. of the Army Act, and the expression 'approving officer' means the officer mentioned in Sub-clause (e) of Sub-section 4 of Section 80 of that Act."

Major Seely 1010

Question proposed, That the Clause be read a second time.

The Financial Secretary to the War Office (*Lord Stanley, Lancashire, Westhoughton*) 1011
Lord Hugh Cecil (*Greenwich*) 1011

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress; and ask leave to sit again."—(*Lord Hugh Cecil.*)

Mr. Brodrick 1012
Major Seely 1012
Lord Stanley 1013
Mr. Pirie (*Aberdeen, N.*) 1014
Lord Hugh Cecil (*Greenwich*) 1014

Question put.

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 45 ; Noes, 140. (Division List No. 55.)

Original Question put and negatived.

Col. Welby 1015

Schedule agreed to

Preamble agreed to.

Bill reported without Amendment ; to be read the third time on Monday next.

Pistols Bill.—[SECOND READING.]—Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

Mr. Helme (*Lancashire, Lancaster*) 1016
Mr. White Ridley (*Stalybridge*) 1017
The Secretary of State for the Home Department (*Mr. Akers Douglas, Kent, St. Augustine's*) 1018

Bill read a second time and committed to the Standing Committee on Law, etc.

Public Houses (Hours of Closing) (Scotland) Bill.—Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [10th March], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." —(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Debate arising.

Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell (*Glasgow College*) 1019
The Lord Advocate (*Mr. A. Graham Murray, Buteshire*) 1019
Mr. Caldwell (*Lanarkshire, Mid*) 1019
Sir Frederick Banbury (*Camberwell, Peckham*) 1020

And, it being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

Elementary Education Amendment Bill.—Read a second time, and committed for Thursday, 23rd April 1020

Adjourned at two minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS : FRIDAY, 3RD APRIL, 1903.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz. :—

Nantwich Urban District Council Bill [Lords].
Queensland Investment and Land Mortgage Bill [Lords].
Old Bridewell Burying Ground Bill [Lords].
Plymouth and Stonehouse Gas Bill [Lords].
Western Trust Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time 1021

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz.:—

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time upon Monday next 1021

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE).—MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, no Standing Orders are applicable, viz.:—

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill.

Ordered That the Bill be read a second time upon Monday next 1021

North Middlesex Gas Bill.—As amended, considered; A Clause added; Bill to be read a third time 1022

Local Government Provisional Order (Housing of the Working Classes) Bill.—Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill, read a second time, and committed 1022

PETITIONS.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL.—Petition from London, against; to lie upon the Table 1022

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Alloa; Johnstone; and Kinross; to lie upon the Table 1022

EDUCATION IN THE METROPOLIS.—Petition from Bromley, for legislation; to lie upon the Table 1022

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—Petitions against: From Anstruther Wester; Anstruther Easter; and Kilrenny; to lie upon the Table 1022

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—Two Petitions from Glasgow, for alteration, to lie upon the Table 1022

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Kirkcudbright; and Edinburgh; to lie upon the Table 1022

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petition of the Scottish Temperance Federation, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1022

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.—Petitions against: From West Derby; and Wandsworth; to lie upon the Table 1022

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.—Petitions against establishment: From Stirling; and West Calder; to lie upon the Table 1022

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SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.—Petitions against: From Bilston; Bow; Handsworth; Birmingham (two); Moseley; Exeter; Wolverhampton; Cannock; Islington; and Kingston-upon-Hull, to lie upon the Table ... 1023

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.—Petition from Wandsworth, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1023

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Ebbw Vale; Earlsfield; and, Reddish; to lie upon the Table 1023

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

CERTIFIED DAY INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS (PARLIAMENTARY GRANT).—Copy presented, of Recommendation of the Secretary of State for the Home Department that the sum contributed out of moneys provided by Parliament to Managers of any certified Day Industrial Schools shall, under certain conditions, continue to be paid in respect of children absent owing to an epidemic [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 1023

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).—Copy presented, of Return showing the Expenditure from the Grant for Public Education in Scotland in the year 1902, with Statistics [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1023

BRITISH MUSEUM.—Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 2nd March; *Mr. John Morley*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 105.]... 1023

CROWN'S NOMINEE ACCOUNT.—Abstract account presented, of Receipts and Payments of the Treasury Solicitor, in the year ended 31st December, 1902, in the Administration of Estates on behalf of the Crown, and Alphabetical List of Intestates' Estates in respect of which Letters of Administration were granted to the Treasury Solicitor as Crown's Nominee, and of other cases (partial Intestacies, etc.) in which accounts were opened in the Books of the Treasury Solicitor in the same year in respect of moneys received by him as Crown's Nominee [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 106.] 1023

SUPERANNUATIONS.—Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 26th March, 1903, declaring that, for the due and efficient discharge of the duties of the office of Director of Naval Education, professional or other peculiar qualifications not ordinarily to be acquired in the Public Service are required [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 1024

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

MEDICAL REFEREE UNDER THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT.—Question, Mr. Bell (Derby); Answer, Mr. Akers Douglas 1024

PROMOTION IN THE DUBLIN POST OFFICE.—Question, Mr. Nannetti (Dublin, College Green); Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 1025

POSTAGE REGULATIONS.—Question, Lieut.-Col. Pryce-Jones (Montgomery Boroughs); Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 1025

EXCISE ADMINISTRATION OF ASSAM.—Question, Mr. Samuel Smith (Flintshire); Answer, Lord George Hamilton 1025

IRISH NATIONAL EDUCATION—ESTIMATE OF COST OF SCHOOLS.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell (Longford, N.); Answer, Mr. Hayes Fisher 1026

BRITISH CAPITAL INVESTED OUTSIDE THE UNITED KINGDOM.—Question, Mr. Seely (Lincoln); Answer, Mr. Ritchie 1026

IRISH SCHOOL TEACHERS, PENSIONS—CASE OF MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN.—Question, Mr. Boland (Kerry, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1027

IRELAND—WASTE CROWN LANDS.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1027

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN THE BOYLE DISTRICT.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1028

DUBLIN METROPOLITAN POLICE—DISMISSAL OF P.C. THOMAS HACKETT.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1028

ORANGE PROCESSION AT CULREADY, COUNTY DERRY.—Question, Mr. Sloan (Belfast, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1029

IMPRISONMENT OF PRIVATE PETER HARVEY.—Question, Mr. J. P. Farrell; Answer, Mr. Brodrick 1029

The Merchant Shipping (Lighthouses) Bill.—[SECOND READING.]—Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Charles McArthur (Liverpool, Exchange) 1030

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Charles McArthur.*)

Sir Albert Rollit (Islington, S.) 1038
Mr. Robson (South Shields) 1043
Mr. Duke (Plymouth) 1046
Sir John Leng (Dundee) 1048
Sir Robert Ropner (Stockton) 1049
Mr. Maconochie (Aberdeenshire, E.) 1052
Mr. Harris (Tynemouth) 1053
Mr. Munro Ferguson (Leith Burghs) 1054
Mr. Hoult (Cheshire, Wirrall) 1055
Mr. Evelyn Cecil (Aston Manor) 1058
Mr. Cathcart Wason (Orkney and Shetland) 1062
Mr. Corbett (Down, N.) 1063
Sir Charles Renshaw (Renfrewshire, W.) 1064
Mr. Joyce (Limerick) 1065
Mr. Renwick (Newcastle-on-Tyne) 1066
Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell (Glasgow College) 1069
The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Ritchie, Croydon) 1070
Col. Denny (Kilmarnock Burghs) 1075
Mr. Lawson Walton (Leeds, S.) 1078
Mr. Thomas Bayley (Derbyshire, Chesterfield) 1079

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 103; Noes, 114. (Division List No. 56.)

Drunkenness and Registration of Clubs (Ireland) Bill.—[SECOND READING.]—Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. T. W. Russell (Tyrone, S.) 1083
The Attorney-General for Ireland (Mr. Atkinson, Londonderry, N.) ... 1083
Mr. T. L. Corbett (Down, N.) 1084
Col. Nolan (Galway, N.) 1084

Sir Frederick Banbury (Camberwell, Peckham) 1084
Col. Lockwood (Essex, Epping) 1085
Mr. McGovern (Cavan, W.) 1087
Mr. Mooney (Dublin Co., S.) 1087
Col. Kenyon-Slaney (Shropshire, Newport) 1088
Sir Lewis McIver (Edinburgh, W.) 1089

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 79; Noes, 102. (Division List No. 57.)

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill.—[SECOND READING.]—Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Herbert Roberts.*)

Debate arising.

Mr. Flower (Bradford, W.) 1091

And, it being half-past Five of the clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Tuesday, 21st April.

Out-Door Relief (Pensioners) Bill.—Read a second time, and committed for Monday next 1092

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP NO. 3.)—Mr. COMPTON RICKETT reported from the Committee on Group No. 3 of Railway Bills, That, for the convenience of parties, they had adjourned till Wednesday, 22nd April, at Eleven of the Clock.

Report to lie upon the Table 1092

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP NO. 1).—Mr. KIMBER reported from the Committee on Group No. 1 of Railway Bills, That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned until Friday, 24th April, at half-past Eleven of the Clock.

Report to lie on the Table 1092

Adjourned at twenty-eight minutes before Six o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: MONDAY, 6TH APRIL, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.—The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, owing to indisposition.

Whereupon Mr. JAMES WILLIAM LOWTHER, the Chairman of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table, and, after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order 1093

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Bath Corporation Water Bill.—Read the third time, and passed.

Bridgwater Gas Bill (King's Consent signified).—Bill read the third time, and passed.

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Broadstairs Gas Bill; Burgess Hill and St. John's Common Gas Bill; Great Northern and City Railway Bill; Ipswich Gas Bill; Market Drayton Gas Bill; Stoke Newington Borough Council Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Harrow Road and Paddington Tramways Bill; Highland and Invergarry and Fort Augustus Railway Companies Bill; Romford and District Tramways Bill.—Read a second time, and committed.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill.—Read a second time, and committed ... 1093

Electric Lighting Provisional Order (No. 1).—Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Mitchelstown, in the county of Cork, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Gerald Balfour ... 1093

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2).—Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Brixham, Brumby and Frodingham, Dawlish, Horbury, Hucknall-under-Huthwaite, Newton-in-Makerfield, Orrill, Scunthorpe, Sidmouth, and Yeovil, ordered to be brought by Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Gerald Balfour 1093

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 3).—Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Auckland (Rural), Carisbrooke and Northwood, Drayton-in-Hales, Illogan, Ingleton, Port Dinorwic, Sevenoaks, South Shields (Rural), Stafford (Rural), and Wilmslow, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Gerald Balfour 1094

Electric Lighting Provisional Order (No. 1) Bill.—"To confirm a Provisional Order made by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Mitchelstown, in the county of Cork," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 138.] 1094

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill.—"To conform certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Brixham, Brumby and Frodingham, Dawlish, Horbury, Hucknall-under-Huthwaite, Newton-in-Makerfield, Orrill, Scunthorpe, Sidmouth, and Yeovil," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 139.] 1094

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill.—"To confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Auckland (Rural), Carisbrooke and Northwood, Drayton-in-Hales, Illogan, Ingleton, Port Dinorwic, Sevenoaks, South Shields (Rural), Stafford (Rural), and Wilmslow," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 140.] 1094

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill.—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders Confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time to-morrow 1094

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Maidstone Gas Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 1095

London Hydraulic Power Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table 1095

Midland Railway Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 1095

Sittingbourne District Gas Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table 1095

SELECTION.—MR. HALSEY reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Member from the Parliamentary Panel of Members of this House to act as Commissioners in pursuance of The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899:—Sir Charles B. Renshaw; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. W. J. Maxwell... ... 1095

Report to lie upon the Table.

PETITIONS.

BANKRUPTCY LAW AMENDMENT BILL.—Petition from Halifax, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1095

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.—Petition from Southampton, for alteration; to lie upon the Table 1095

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.—Petitions in favour: From St. Helens; Oldham; Walsall; Batley; and Andover; to lie upon the Table 1095

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petitions in favour; From Glenmuick; Perth; and Edinburgh; to lie upon the Table 1095

EDUCATION IN THE METROPOLIS.—Petition from Lambeth, for legislation; to lie upon the Table 1095

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—Petitions for alteration: From Queensbury; Annan; Inverkeithing; and Renfrew; to lie upon the Table 1096

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petition from Renfrew, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1096

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.—Petition from Andover, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table 1096

PUBLIC HOUSES (HOURS OF CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL..—Petition from Dundee, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1096

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.—Petitions against: From Devonport; Finsbury Park; Bristol; Watford; and Kingston-upon-Hull; to lie upon the Table 1096

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.—Petition from Brixton, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1096

SOLICITORS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petition from Perth, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1096

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RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

CERTIFIED DAY INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS (PARLIAMENTARY GRANT).—Paper [presented 3rd April] to be printed. [No. 107.] 1096

LUNACY (SCOTLAND).—Copy presented, of Forty-fifth Annual Report of the General Board of Commissioners in Lunacy for Scotland [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1096

PRISONS (SCOTLAND).—Copy presented, of Twenty-fifth Annual Report of the Prison Commissioners for Scotland, being the Sixty-fourth Annual Report on Prisons in Scotland, 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table ... 1096

OFFICERS' EXPENSES.—Copy presented, of Report of the Committee on Expenses incurred by Officers of the Army [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1097

MUNICIPAL ELECTION PETITION (BOROUGH OF SHREWSBURY).—Copy presented, of Report made by Morton William Smith, esquire, barrister-at-law, the Commissioner appointed for the trial of the petition against the election of a town councillor for the Castle Fields Ward of the borough of Shrewsbury, holden on the 1st November 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table... 1097

EXPLOSIONS (IGNITION OF POWDER AT THE E. C. POWDER COMPANY'S FACTORY AT STONE, NEAR DARTFORD).—Copy presented, of Report by Captain J. H. Thomson, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Explosives, to the right hon. the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on the circumstances attending an accident which occurred in the drying house for smokeless powder at the Factory of the E. C. Powder Company, Limited, at Beacon Wood, Stone, near Dartford, on the 3rd March 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1097

BANKING, RAILWAY, AND CANAL STATISTICS (IRELAND).—Copy presented, of Report on the Banking, Railway, and Canal Statistics of Ireland for the half-year ended 31st December 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1097

GREEK LOAN OF 1898.—Account presented up to 31st March 1903 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 1097

EGYPTIAN GUARANTEED LOAN OF 1885.—Account presented up to 31st March, 1903 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 1097

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).—Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 2950 and 2951 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1097

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

LOCAL EDUCATION EXPENDITURE—ACCOUNTS.—Question, Mr. Ellis Griffith (Anglesey); Answer, Mr. Walter Long 1098

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES—HOUSES BUILDING.—Question, Mr. Frederick Wilson (Norfolk, Mid); Answer, Mr. Walter Long 1098

NEWSPAPER PUBLICATION IN GIBRALTAR.—Question, Mr. Keir Hardie (Merthyr Tydvil); Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 1098

POSTAL DELIVERIES IN GLENAVY DISTRICT, COUNTY ANTRIM.—Question, Mr. Charles Craig (Antrim, S,); Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 1099

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TELEGRAPHIC DEPARTMENT—RESIGNATIONS AND TRANSFERS.—Question, Mr. Bayley (Derbyshire, Chesterfield); Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain ... 1099

POSTAL AND TELEGRAPHIC SERVICES—DOUBLE INCREMENTS FOR DUAL QUALIFICATIONS.—Question, Mr. H. D. Greene (Shrewsbury); Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 1100

CENTRAL LONDON RAILWAY—DAMAGE BY VIBRATION.—Question, Mr. H. D. Greene; Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 1100

SAFETY RAILS ON FISHING BOATS.—Question, Mr. Crombie (Kincardineshire); Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 1101

DAMAGE BY THE SEA AT HALLSANDS, DEVON.—Question, Mr. Mildmay (Devonshire, Totnes); Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour... 1102

IMPORTS OF CATTLE, DEAD MEAT, ETC.—Question, Mr. Alfred Davies (Carmarthen Boroughs); Answer, Mr. Hanbury 1102

PLAGUE IN INDIA—SUGGESTED COMMISSION.—Question, Dr. Farquharson (Aberdeenshire, W.); Answer, Lord George Hamilton 1103

INTEREST ON GOVERNMENT RUPEE PAPER—FIXED RATE OF EXCHANGE.—Question, Sir Mancherjee Bhownaggree (Bethnal Green, N.E.); Answer, Lord George Hamilton 1103

PAYMENT OF INCOME TAX—STATISTICS.—Question, Sir William Harcourt (Monmouthshire, W.); Answer, Mr. Ritchie 1103

SECONDARY EDUCATION—ASSISTANCE BY ENDOWED SCHOOLS.—Question, Mr. Brigg (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley); Answer, Sir William Anson 1104

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS.—Question, Mr. J. H. Lewis (Flint Boroughs); Answer, Sir William Anson 1104

EDUCATION GRANTS.—Question, Mr. Caldwell (Lanarkshire, Mid); Answer, Sir William Anson 1104

INISHOWEN RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL—APPOINTMENT OF CLERK.—Question, Mr. Nannetti (Dublin, College Green); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1105

LAND ON THE SKERRETT ESTATE, COUNTY CLARE—CASE OF REV. W. J. ELLIOTT.—Question, Mr. William Redmond (Clare, E.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1105

GRANARD UNION—PRINTING CONTRACTS.—Question, Mr. Tully (Leitrim, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1106

LONGFORD UNION AND LONGFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL—PRINTING CONTRACT.—Question, Mr. Tully; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1107

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN IRELAND—APPLICATION OF THOMAS SMITH.—Question, Mr. McGovern (Cavan, W.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1107

IRISH LAND BILL—COST OF INVESTIGATING TITLES.—Question, Sir Edward Strachey (Somersetshire, E.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1108

SOUTH AFRICAN WAR—COLONIAL CONTINGENTS.—Question, Sir John Colomb (Great Yarmouth); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 1108

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SOUTH AFRICAN MEDALS—CLAIMS OF THE DERBY VOLUNTEER R.A.M.C.—Question, Mr. Bell (Derby); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 1109

RIFLE RANGES—HALF CHARGE AMMUNITION.—Question, Mr. Frederick Wilson; Answer, Mr. Brodrick 1110

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION—COURSE FOR VOLUNTEER ENGINEERS.—Question, Mr. Charles Hobhouse (Bristol, E.); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 1110

REPORT ON THE HEALTH OF THE ARMY.—Question, Mr. Charles Hobhouse; Answer, Mr. Brodrick 1111

VOLUNTEER ENLISTMENTS. — Question, Mr. Seely (Lincoln); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 1111

ROYAL COMMISSION ON VOLUNTEERS AND MILITIA—REPRESENTATION OF VOLUNTEER MEDICAL SERVICE.—Question, Sir John Tuke (Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 1111

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NEW RECRUITING REGULATIONS.—Question, Major Seely (Isle of Wight); Answer, the Secretary of State for War (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford) 1112

ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY GUNS.—Question, Major Seely; Answer, Mr. Brodrick 1112

CANADIAN MEAT FOR THE ARMY.—Question, Sir Gilbert Parker (Gravesend); Answer, Mr. Brodrick 1112

TRINIDAD RIOTS COMMISSION.—Question, Mr. Evelyn Cecil (Aston Manor); Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. J. Chamberlain, Birmingham, W.) 1113

WEST INDIAN SUGAR EXPORTS.—Question, Mr. Runciman (Dewsbury); Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 1113

COTTON CULTIVATION IN THE WEST INDIES.—Question, Mr. Runciman; Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 1113

VERNACULAR EDUCATION IN CEYLON.—Question, Mr. Schwann (Manchester, N.) Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 1114

INDENTURED COOLIE LABOUR IN NATAL.—Questions, Sir Mancherjee Bhownaggree (Bethnal Green, N.E.); Answers, The Secretary of State for India (Lord George Hamilton, Middlesex, Ealing) 1114

RED SEA LIGHTS.—Question, Sir J. Fergusson (Manchester, N.E.); Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Gerald Balfour, Leeds, Central) 1115

RAILWAY RATES ON HOME AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE.—Question, Mr. Herbert Roberts (Denbighshire, W.); Answer, The President of the Board of Agriculture (Mr. Hanbury, Preston) 1116

INSPECTION OF DANISH AND DUTCH BACON.—Question, Mr. O'Mara (Kilkenny, S.); Answer, Mr. Hanbury 1116

TRICHINÆ IN IMPORTED BACON AND PORK.—Question, Mr. O'Mara; Answer, Mr. Hanbury 1117

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NEW YORK MAIL SERVICE—SLOW STEAMERS.—Question, Sir John Leng (Dundee); Answer, The Postmaster-General (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.) 1118

TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION WITH WESTRAY.—Question, Mr. Cathcart Wason (Orkney and Shetland); Answer, Mr. Austen Chamberlain 1118

CHILDREN IN STATE-AIDED SCHOOLS AND DENTISTRY.—Question, Mr. Weir (Ross and Cromarty); Answer, The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education (Sir William Anson, Oxford University) 1119

GLASGOW SLUMS.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. A. Graham Murray, Buteshire) 1119

ISLAND OF LEWIS—REPORT ON SOCIAL CONDITION.—Question, Mr. Weir; Answer, Mr. A. Graham Murray 1119

DUBLIN DIVISIONAL MAGISTRATES.—Question, Mr. Mooney (Dublin Co., S.); Answer—The Attorney-General for Ireland (Mr. Atkinson, Londonderry, N.) 1119

DISQUALIFIED IRISH COUNCILLORS.—Question, Mr. Cullinan (Tipperary, S.); Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Wyndham, Dover)... ... 1120

IRISH EVICTED TENANTS.—Question, Mr. Cullinan; Answer, Mr. Wyndham ... 1120

DISQUALIFICATION BY CRIMES ACT SENTENCES.—Question, Mr. William Redmond (Clare, E.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1121

NATIONAL LIBRARY, DUBLIN.—Question, Mr. Boland (Kerry, S.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1121

WHITE ESTATE, NEAR BANTRY.—Question, Mr. Gilhooly (Cork Co., W.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1121

GLENGARRIFFE BURIAL GROUND.—Question, Mr. Gilhooly; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1122

SELECT COMMITTEE ON IRISH VALUATION.—Question, Mr. Wolff (Belfast, E.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1122

MARGARETTA BUOYS, GALWAY BAY.—Questions, Mr. Joyce (Limerick), and Mr. Gibson Bowles (Lynn Regis); Answers, Mr. Gerald Balfour 1122

STRAW ISLAND, SOUTH ARRAN AND ROANCARRIG LIGHTS.—Question, Mr. Joyce; Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 1123

MR. WYNDHAM'S SPEECH ON THE IRISH LAND BILL.—Questions, Mr. William Redmond and Mr. T. W. Russell (Tyrone, S.); Answers, Mr. Wyndham... 1124

IRISH GOLD ORNAMENTS.—Question, Mr. William Redmond; Answer, The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.)... 1125

NAVAL AND MILITARY EDUCATION.—Question, Mr. Edmund Robertson; Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 1125

ROYAL PATRIOTIC COMMISSION.—Question, Mr. Kearley (Devonport); Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 1125

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.—Question, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (Stirling Burghs); Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour... 1125

THE VOTE OF CENSURE—THE PENRHYN QUARRY DISPUTE.—Question, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman; Answer, Mr. A. J. Balfour 1126

Post Office Sites Bill.—Ordered, That the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills do examine the Post Office Sites Bill with respect to compliance with the Standing Orders relative to Private Bills.—(*Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) 1126

NEW BILLS.

Municipal Corporations (Audit) Bill.—"To amend the law relating to the audit of the accounts of Municipal Corporations in England and Wales," presented by Major Seely; supported by Sir James Fergusson, Sir Barrington Simeon, Mr. Galloway, and Mr. Flower; to be read a second time upon Monday, 27th April, and to be printed. [Bill 141.] 1126

Trawlers' Certificates Suspension Bill.—"To enable Courts to suspend the certificates of trawlers convicted of illegal trawling," presented by Mr. Bignold; supported by Mr. Irwin Cox, Mr. Leveson Gower, Mr. J. E. Gordon, and Mr. Cathcart Wason; to be read a second time upon Monday, 18th May, and to be printed. [Bill 142.] 1127

Parliamentary Voters' Registration Bill.—"To amend the law for the Registration of Voters and other purposes pertaining to elections," presented by Mr. Cremer; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 21st April, and to be printed. [Bill 143.]... 1127

THE PORT OF LONDON.

The President of the Board of Trade (*Mr. Gerald Balfour, Leeds, Central*) 1127

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to establish a Commission for the administration of the Port of London, and for transferring to the Commission the undertakings of certain dock companies, and certain powers and duties of the Conservators of the River Thames and the Watermen's Company, and for other purposes connected therewith."—(*Mr. Gerald Balfour.*)

Mr. Sydney Buxton (*Tower Hamlets, Poplar*) 1131

Question agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Gerald Balfour and Mr. Bonar Law.

Port of London Bill.—"To establish a Commission for the administration of the Port of London, and for transferring to the Commission the undertakings of certain dock companies, and certain powers and duties of the Conservators of the River Thames and the Watermen's Company, and for other purposes connected therewith," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 21st April, and to be printed. [Bill 144.]

Licensing (Scotland) Acts Amendment Bill.—[SECOND READING.]—Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Ure (*Linlithgowshire*)... 1133

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Amendment proposed—

"To leave out all the words from the word 'That' to the end of the Question, and add the words 'no measure dealing with licensing reform in Scotland will be satisfactory which fails to include provisions securing direct popular control of the liquor traffic.'"—(*Mr. Ure.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The Solicitor-General for Scotland (*Mr. Scott Dickson, Glasgow, Bridgton*) 1141
Mr. Thomas Shaw (*Hawick Burghs*) 1145
Mr. Shaw Stewart (*Renfrewshire, W.*) 1153
Mr. Wallace (*Perth*) 1156
Sir John Batty Tuke (*Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities*) ... 1158
Mr. Crombie (*Kincardineshire*) 1159
Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell (*Glasgow, College*) 1162
Mr. Chas. Douglas (*Lanarkshire, N.W.*) 1164
Mr. Corbett (*Glasgow, Tradeston*) 1167
Mr. Ashen (*Elgin Burghs*) 1167
Mr. Parker Smith (*Lanarkshire, Partick*) 1173
Mr. Cathcart Wason (*Orkney and Shetland*) 1175
Mr. Charles Renshaw (*Renfrewshire, W.*) 1178
Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (*Stirling Burghs*) 1181
The Lord Advocate (*Mr. A. Graham-Murray, Buteshire*) 1185
Sir John Leng (*Dundee*) 1189
Mr. Hunter Craig (*Lanarkshire, Govan*) 1192

It being half-past Seven of the Clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed this evening.

EVENING SITTING.

Licensing (Scotland) Acts Amendment Bill.—Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [6th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Which Amendment was—

"To leave out all the words from the word 'That' to the end of the Question, and add the words 'no measure dealing with licensing reform in Scotland will be satisfactory which fails to include provisions securing direct popular control over the liquor traffic.'"—(*Mr. Ure.*)

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate resumed.

Mr. Hunter Craig 1194
Sir Andrew Agnew (*Edinburgh, S.*) 1196
The Master of Elibank (*Edinburgh, Midlothian*) 1197
Mr. Munro Ferguson (*Leith Burghs*) 1197
Mr. Dalziel (*Kirkcaldy Burghs*) 1201
Mr. Baird (*Glasgow, Central*) 1202

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Sir Robert Reid (*Dumfries Burghs*) 1202

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the words 'the Standing Committee on Trade, etc,' and add the words 'a Committee consisting of all the Members representing Scottish constituencies, together with fifteen other Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection.'"—(*Sir Robert Reid.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left outstand part of the Question."

Mr. A. Graham Murray 1206
Mr. Buchanan (*Perthshire, E.*) 1209
Sir Charles Renshaw 1211
Mr. Eugene Wason 1211
Sir J. Stirling-Maxwell 1212
Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman 1213
The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (*Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.*) 1214
Mr. Dalziel 1218

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 121; Noes, 51. (Division List No. 58.)

Original Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 121; Noes, 52. (Division List No. 59.)

Bill Committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc.

Licensing Acts Consolidation (Scotland) Bill.—[Second Reading.]—Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. A. Graham Murray 1222
Sir Robert Reid 1223
Mr. Buchanan 1224

Bill read a second time.

Mr. Thomas Shaw 1225
Mr. T. W. Russell (*Tyrone, S.*) 1225
Mr. Parker Smith 1226
Mr. Caldwell 1226

Bill committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc.

Army (Annual) Bill.—[Third Reading.]—Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

Major Seely (*Isle of Wight*) 1227
The Secretary of State for War (*Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford*) ... 1227
Mr. Caldwell 1228
Sir John Gorst (*Cambridge University*) 1228
Major Jameson (*Clare, W.*) 1228

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

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EVICTED TENANTS (IRELAND).—Return ordered, "Showing the number of tenants evicted in Ireland within the past twenty-five years who have not been re-instated in their holdings, as follows: number under £10 yearly rent; number over £10 and under £20; number over £20 and under £50; number over £50 and under £100; number over £100 and under £200; number over £200."—(*Mr. Cullinan.*) 1228

Adjourned at thirteen minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: TUESDAY, 7TH APRIL, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

North Middlesex Gas Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 1229

Sutton District Water Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 1229

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 1229

Castleblaney, Keady, and Armagh Railway (Extension of Time) Bill.—Petition for additional provision; referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 1229

PETITIONS.

CLUBS REGISTRATION (SCOTLAND).—Petition from Aberdeen, for legislation; to lie upon the Table 1229

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Wisbech; and Halifax (two); to lie upon the Table... 1229

DESTITUTE ADULT BLIND.—Petition from Falkirk, for legislation; to lie upon the Table 1229

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Ballantrae; and Colmonell; to lie upon the Table 1229

EDUCATION IN THE METROPOLIS.—Petitions for legislation: From London (four); and Oxshott and other places; to lie upon the Table 1229

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—Petitions for alteration: From Newburgh; Kinghorn; Dysart; and Aberdeen; to lie upon the Table ... 1229

PUBLIC HOUSES (HOURS OF CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petition from Glasgow, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1229

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.—Petition from Gloucester, against; to lie upon the Table 1230

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.—Petitions against: From Colchester; Gloucester; Salisbury; and Swansea; to lie upon the Table 1230

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RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1884.—Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 27th March, 1903, declaring that Mrs. Charlotte Ann Reynolds, Postmistress, Daventry Post Office, was appointed without a Civil Service Certificate through inadvertence on the part of the head of her Department [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 1230

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1887.—Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 28th March, 1903, granting a retired allowance to George F. Laidlaw, Rural Postman, Christchurch Post Office, under the Act [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 1230

MILITARY EXPENDITURE.—Return presented, relative thereto [Address 12th March; *Mr. Charles Hobhouse*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 108.] 1230

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND) (SALMON FISHERIES).—Copy presented, of a Bacteriological Investigation into the cause of Salmon Disease, by Mr. J. Hume Patterson, of the Bacteriological Laboratory of the City of Glasgow [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1230

DISEASES OF ANIMALS ACTS, 1894 AND 1896.—Copies presented, of two Orders, numbered 6641 and 6648, respectively, relating to the landing of Foreign Animals in Great Britain [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 1230

COTTON FACTORIES.—Address for "Return of the number of Cotton Factories subject to inspection under The Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, and the number of spindles and looms used in such factories."—(*Sir William Holland.*) 1230

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

ELECTION OF CITIZENS' AUDITOR AT LEICESTER.—Question, Mr. Keir Hardie (Merthyr Tydvil); Answer, Mr. Walter Long 1231

TAUNTON ISOLATION HOSPITAL—REFUSAL TO GRANT AN INQUIRY.—Question, Col. Welby (Taunton); Answer, Mr. Walter Long 1231

TONNAGE OF FISHING VESSELS—COST OF GOVERNMENT INSPECTION.—Question, Capt. Sinclair (Forfarshire); Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 1232

SOUTHAMPTON HARBOUR—SPEED LIMIT.—Question, Sir Robert Fitzgerald (Cambridge); Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 1233

SUGAR IMPORTS.—Question, Sir James Woodhouse (Huddersfield); Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 1233

HOLYHEAD HARBOUR—REMOVAL OF ROCKS.—Question, Mr. Ellis Griffith (Anglesey); Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 1234

BOARD OF TRADE CONCESSION TO NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY.—Question, Mr. Ellis Griffith; Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 1234

HOLYHEAD LANDING STAGE—LACK OF ACCOMMODATION.—Question, Mr. Ellis Griffith; Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 1235

DEVELOPMENT OF HOLYHEAD BAY.—Question, Mr. Ellis Griffith; Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 1235

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HIGH WATER LINE AT INCH STRAND.—Question, Mr. Thomas O'Donnell (Kerry, W.); Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 1235

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Mr. Hayes Fisher (Fulham) 1254
Mr. A. J. Balfour... 1258
Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman 1259
Mr. Blake 1259

Port of London Bill.—Ordered, That the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills do examine the Port of London Bill with respect to compliance with the Standing Orders relative to Private Bills.—(*Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) ... 1260

NEW BILLS.

Parliamentary Voters and Elections Bill.—"To amend the Law relating to the Qualification and Registration of Parliamentary Voters and to Parliamentary Elections, and to the Expenses of Returning Officers; and for other purposes in relation thereto," presented by Mr. John Sinclair; supported by Mr. Ashton, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Lloyd-George, and Mr. Ure; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 1st July, and to be printed. [Bill 145.] 1260

Crofters Holdings Bill.—"To amend The Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1886," presented by Mr. Cathcart Wason; supported by Mr. Bignold, Mr. Leveson-Gower, Mr. Dewar, Mr. Harmsworth, Mr. John Edward Gordon, and Mr. Weir; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 22nd April, and to be printed. [Bill 146.] 1260

Ecclesiastical Dilapidations Bill.—"To amend the law relating to Ecclesiastical Dilapidations," presented by Major Rasch; supported by Colonel Tufnell, Sir John Kennaway, and Mr. Vicary Gibbs; to be read a second time upon Friday, 24th April, and to be printed. [Bill 147.] 1260

British and Irish Meat Protection Bill.—"To prevent Foreign and Colonial Meat being sold as British and Irish Meat," presented by Mr. Alfred Davies; supported by Dr. Farquharson, Mr. William Redmond, Major Rasch, Captain Norton, Mr. Maconochie, Mr. Joyce, and Mr. Vaughan-Davies; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 29th April, and to be printed. [Bill 148.] 1260

Licences Renewal and Transfer Bill.—"To restrict, for a limited period, the powers of justices to refuse the Renewal or Transfer of Licences in certain cases," presented by Sir William Hart Dyke; supported by Sir James Fergusson; Mr. Bagot, Mr. Whitmore, Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, Major Rasch, Mr. Goulding, and Mr. Cripps; to be read a second time upon Friday, 1st May, and to be printed. [Bill 149.] 1260

Cheap Trains Bill.—"To amend the law relating to Cheap Trains for the Working Classes," presented by Captain Norton; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 21st July, and to be printed. [Bill 150.] 1260

Railways (Electrical Power) Bill.—"To facilitate the introduction and use of Electrical Power on Railways," presented by Mr. Gerald Balfour; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 21st April, and to be printed. [Bill 151.] 1261

Sunday Trading (Scotland) Bill.—"For the Regulation and Control of Sunday Trading in Scotland," presented by Mr. Cameron Corbett; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 23rd April, and to be printed. [Bill 152.] 1261

Clubs Registration (Scotland) Bill.—"For the Registration and Regulation of Clubs in Scotland," presented by Mr. Cameron Corbett; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 23rd April, and to be printed. [Bill 153.] ... 1261

London Education Bill.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education (Sir William Anson, Oxford University) 1261

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to extend and adapt the Education Act, 1902, to London."—(*Sir William Anson.*)

Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (Stirling Burghs) 1273
Sir John Gorst (Cambridge University) 1279
Dr. Macnamara (Camberwell, N.) 1284
Mr. W. F. D. Smith (Strand, Westminster) 1292
Mr. John Burns (Battersea) 1295
Mr. Peel (Manchester, S.) 1303
Mr. Lough (Islington, W.)... 1306
Mr. Ernest Gray (West Ham, N.)... 1309
Mr. Sydney Buxton (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) 1316
Sir William Anson 1320
Mr. Lloyd-George (Carnarvon Boroughs) 1323
Col. Lockwood (Essex, Epping) 1329
Mr. Corrie Grant (Warwickshire, Rugby)... 1330

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 159; Noes, 77. (Division List No. 60.)

Bill ordered to be brought in by Sir William Anson, Mr. Walter Long, and Mr. Attorney-General.

London Education Bill.—"To extend and adapt the Education Act, 1902, to London," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 21st April, and to be printed. [Bill 154.]

EVENING SITTING.

NATIONAL OPERA.

Mr. Galloway (Manchester, S.W.)... 1333
Mr. Claude Hay (Shoreditch, Hoxton) 1341

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this House, with a view to directing the musical taste of the people into proper channels, it is desirable that National Opera Houses under public control should be established in the principal cities of the United Kingdom."—(*Mr. Galloway.*)

The Secretary to the Board of Education (Sir William Anson, Oxford University) 1343

Notice taken that forty Members were not present; House counted, and forty Members not being present,—

The House was adjourned at two minutes past Ten of the Clock till To-morrow.

Adjourned at two minutes after Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: WEDNESDAY, 8TH APRIL, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Nantwich Urban District Council Bill [LORDS].—Read a second time, and committed 1345

Plymouth and Stonehouse Gas Bill [LORDS]; Queensland Investment and Land Mortgage Bill [Lords]; Western Trust Bill [Lords].—Read a second time, and committed 1345

PRIVATE BILLS, ETC.—Ordered, That Standing Orders 39, 129, and 230 be suspended, and that the time for depositing Petitions and Memorials against Private Bills, or against any Bill to confirm any Provisional Order or Provisional Certificate, and for depositing duplicates of any Documents relating to any Bill to confirm any Provisional Order or Provisional Certificate, also for depositing at the Private Bill Office all Documents relating to any Order under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, be extended to the first day on which the House shall sit after the Recess.—(*The Deputy Chairman.*) 1345

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 3).—Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board for Ireland relating to the counties of Dublin and Wexford, the urban districts of Blackrock, Dalkey, Killiney and Ballybrack, Kingstown, Pembroke, Rathmines and Rathgar and Wexford, and the town of Keady, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland and Mr. Wyndham 1345

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 4).—Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board for Ireland relating to Belfast (Rural), and Londonderry, and the Rathdrum and Wicklow Joint Burial Board District, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland and Mr. Wyndham 1345

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 4).—Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Camborne, Heston and Isleworth, Mountain Ash, New Windsor, Southport, Stratford-upon-Avon, Tunbridge Wells, and Whitley and Monkseaton, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Grant Lawson and Mr. Walter Long 1346

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill.—"To confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board for Ireland relating to the counties of Dublin and Wexford, the urban districts of Blackrock, Dalkey, Killiney and Ballybrack, Kingstown, Pembrobe, Rathmines and Rathgar and Wexford, and the town of Keady," presented and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 155.] 1346

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill.—"To confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board for Ireland relating to Belfast (Rural) and Londonderry, and the Rathdrum and Wicklow Joint Burial Board District," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 156.] 1346

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill.—"To confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Camborne, Heston and Isleworth, Mountain Ash, New Windsor, Southport, Stratford-upon-Avon, Tunbridge Wells, and Whitley and Monkseaton," presented and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 157.] 1346

PETITIONS.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Hastings; Arundel; Swindon; and Maidenhead; to lie upon the Table ... 1346

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—Petition from Lilliesleaf, in favour; to lie upon the Table... 1347

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—Petition from Glasgow, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1347

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.—Petition from Bingley, for alteration of law; to lie upon the Table 1347

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.—Petitions against: From Grantham; and Kensington; to lie upon the Table 1347

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.—Petition from Bristol, in favour; to lie upon the Table 1347

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.—Petitions against establishment: From Hawick; Selkirk; Galashiels; and Kelso; to lie upon the Table ... 1347

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.—Petitions against: From Mile End; Tamworth; Grantham; and Reading; to lie upon the Table 1347

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.—Petitions in favour: From Leicester; Wantage; and Erdington; to lie upon the Table 1347

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRADE DISPUTES.—Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 2nd April; *Mr. Bell*]; to lie upon the Table 1347

CYPRUS.—Copy presented, of annual Report on Cyprus for 1901 2 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table... 1347

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND). Copy presented, of twenty-first annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland, being for the year 1902. Part I., General Report [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1347

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND).—Copy presented, of twenty-first Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland, being for the year 1902. Part II., Salmon Fisheries [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1348

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND).—Copy presented, of Return of the Areas, Population, and Valuation of Counties, Burghs, and Parishes in Scotland [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1348

NATIONAL GALLERY, ETC. (SCOTLAND).—Copy presented, of Ninth Annual Report to the Secretary for Scotland by the Commissioners and Trustees of the Board of Manufactures in Scotland, being for the year ending 30th September, 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1348

COURT OF SESSION (SCOTLAND) SHERIFF COURTS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1876.—Copy presented, of Act of Sederunt anent regulating the places in counties in Scotland at which Commissary business shall be conducted [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 1348

REFORMATORY AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS (GREAT BRITAIN).—Copy presented, of Forty-sixth Report of His Majesty's Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools for 1902. Part I. List of schools and detailed Reports [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1348

PAUPERISM (ENGLAND AND WALES) (HALF YEARLY STATEMENTS).—Copy ordered, "of Statement of the number of Paupers relieved on the 1st day of January, 1903, and similar Statement for the 1st day of July, 1903 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 147, of Session 1902)."—(*Mr. Grant Lawson.*) 1348

SEA FISHERIES OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, 1902.—Copy ordered, "of Statistical Tables and Memorandum relating to the Sea Fisheries of the United Kingdom in the year 1902, including also a Return showing the quantity of fish carried by railway from each of the principal ports of England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, in each year from 1897 to 1902, inclusive (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 161, of Session 1902)."—(*Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) 1348

ROYAL NAVY (RETIRED OFFICERS).—Return ordered, "of the number and rank of Officers of the Royal Navy between the ages of forty and sixty years who, by reason of compulsory retirement under regulations as to age, were upon the Retired List on the 1st day of April, 1903, and who during their active service qualified as Torpedo Lieutenants and became specialists in submarine mining, and showing the annual aggregate charges borne on the Non-effective Votes for such Officers, in the following form:—

Qualified as specialists in torpedo and submarine service.		
Rank.	Number.	Total Annual Charge borne on Non-effective Vote.
		£
Flag Officers - - - - - -		
Captains - - - - - - -		
Commanders - - - - - -		
Lieutenants - - - - - -		
Total - - - - -		

Sir John Colomb 1349

PAUPERISM (ENGLAND AND WALES) (HALF YEARLY STATEMENTS).—Return presented, relative thereto [Ordered 8th April; *Mr. Grant Lawson*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 108.] 1349

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

MERCHANDISE MARKS ACT—CEILING LATHS. Question, Mr. Keir Hardie (Merthyr Tydvil); Answer, Mr. Ritchie 1349

LONDON TRAFFIC COMMISSION—DELAY IN PUBLICATION OF EVIDENCE.—Question, Sir George Bartley (Islington, N.); Answer, Mr. Ritchie ... 1350

THE NATIONAL DEBT.—Question, Sir William Harcourt (Monmouthshire, W.); Answer, Mr. Ritchie 1350

ATLANTIC SHIPPING TRUST AGREEMENT.—Question, Mr. Gibson Bowles (Lynn Regis); Answer, Mr. Gerald Balfour 1351

INDIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE BRUSSELS SUGAR CONVENTION.—Question, Mr. Gibson Bowles; Answer, Lord George Hamilton 1351

HOLLAND, ITALY, AND FRANCE AND THE BRUSSELS SUGAR CONVENTION.—Question, Mr. Gibson Bowles; Answer, Lord Cranborne 1352

SCOTCH EDUCATION—PAYMENT OF GRANTS BY INSTALMENTS.—Question, Mr. George Brown (Edinburgh, Central); Answer, Mr. A. Graham Murray ... 1352

TREASURY EXPENDITURE IN IRELAND.—Question, Mr. O'Doherty (Donegal, N.) Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1352

IRISH LAND BILL—LIMITS UNDER CLAUSE 2.—Question, Mr. Channing (Northamptonshire, E.); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1353

SUGAR BOUNTIES IN BRITISH GUIANA.—Question, Mr. Gibson Bowles; Answer, Mr. J. Chamberlain 1353

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN IN THEATRES.—Questions, Mr. Horner (Lambeth, N.); Answers, The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Cochrane, Ayrshire, N.) 1354

THEDDINGWORTH VILLAGE SCHOOL.—Question, Mr. Logan (Leicestershire, Loughborough); Answer, The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education (Sir William Anson, Oxford University) 1355

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL EDUCATION SCHEME.—Question, Mr. Charles Allen (Gloucestershire, Stroud); Answer, Sir William Anson ... 1355

KINGSTOWN TOWN TENANCY.—Question, Mr. Field (Dublin, St. Patrick); Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Wyndham, Dover) 1356

IRELAND—BOARD OF GUARDIANS AND TENDERS FOR MEDICAL STORES.—Question, Mr. Field; Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1356

IRISH LAND PURCHASE.—Question, Mr. George Faber (York); Answer, Mr. Wyndham 1357

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT OVER EASTER HOLIDAYS.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 21st April."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

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THE BAGDAD RAILWAY.

Mr. Gibson Bowles (Lynn Regis) 1358
Sir Charles Dilke (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) 1364
Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice (Wiltshire, Cricklade) 1366
The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) 1369
Mr. William Redmond (Clare, E.) 1375
The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Lord Cranborne, Rochester) 1377

THE REDUCTION OF LICENCES.

Mr. Lloyd-George (Carnarvon Boroughs) 1378
Mr. A. J. Balfour 1385
Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman (Stirling Burghs) 1389
Sir Frederick Banbury (Camberwell, Peckham) 1392
Mr. Bryn Roberts (Carnarvonshire, Eifion) 1392
Sir Fortescue Flannery (Yorkshire, Shipley) 1393
Mr. Austin Taylor (Liverpool, East Toxteth) 1394

Question put, and agreed to.

Adjourned at three minutes before Five o'clock till Tuesday, 21st April.

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THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(*AUTHORISED EDITION*)

IN THE

FOURTH SESSION OF THE *TWENTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT* OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*, IN THE
THIRD YEAR OF THE REIGN OF

HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII.

THIRD VOLUME OF SESSION.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 24th March, 1903.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with.

Gosport, Fareham, and Cosham Tramways [H.L.]. The same was ordered to lie on the Table.

Dewsbury, Batley, and Birstal Tramways Bill [H.L.]. Committed: The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Gosport, Fareham, and Cosham Tramways Bill [H.L.]. Read 2^a (according to Order).

Hamilton, Motherwell, and Wishaw Tramways Bill [H.L.]. The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the promoters do not intend to proceed further with the Bill: Order of the Day for the Second Reading read, and discharged: Ordered that the Bill be not further proceeded with.

Wakefield and District Tramways Bill [H.L.] Read 2^a (according to Order).

Old Bridewell Burying Ground Bill [H.L.]. Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Queensland Investment and Land Mortage Bill [H.L.].

Nantwich Urban District Council Bill [H L.]. Reported, with Amendments.

Western Trust Bill [H.L.]. Reported, without Amendment.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EXPLOSIVES (EXPLOSION AT MESSRS. NOBEL'S FACTORY AT ARDEER).

Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department by Captain M. B. Lloyd, His Majesty's Inspector of Explosives, on the circumstances attending an explosion of nitro-glycerine which occurred in one of the final washing houses of the factory of Nobel's Explosives Company, Limited, at Ardeer, near Stevenston, Ayrshire, on the 7th October, 1902. Presented [by Command], and ordered to lie on the Table.

SUPERANNUATION.

Treasury minute, dated 16th March, 1903, granting a retired allowance to Arthur Algernon Parkin, third-class clerk, Money Order Office, Post Office, under Section 2 of the Superannuation Act, 1887.

NATIONAL DEBT ANNUITIES.

Account of the gross amount of all bank annuities, and any annuities for terms of years, transferred, and of all sums of money paid to the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt, and the gross amount of annuities for lives and for terms of years which have been granted for the same, and contracts for payments on death which have been made within the year ended 5th January, 1903.

Laid before the House [pursuant to Act], and ordered to lie on the Table.

Light Locomotives (Ireland) Bill. Read 3ª [according to order], with the Amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons.

Shops (Early Closing) Bill [H.L.]. Reported from the Standing Committee with further Amendments. The Report of the Amendments made in Committee of the Whole House, and by the Standing Committee, to be received on Friday next, and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 23.)

Prevention of Corruption Bill [H.L.]. Reported from the Standing Committee without further Amendment. The Report of the Amendments made in Committee of the Whole House to be received on Thursday next.

Marine Insurance Bill [H.L.]. Reported from the Standing Committee without Amendment, and to be read 3ª on Thursday next.

THE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENCE.

The Earl of ROSEBERY, in rising to move to resolve—

> "That this House desires to express its approval of the proposed Council for National Defence, and its earnest hope that the first efforts of that council may be directed to the adjustment of the national armaments to the naval, military, and financial conditions of the Empire."

Said—My Lords, I think I owe an explanation to the House as to why I am bringing on this Motion so soon after the discussion inaugurated by my noble friend behind me, Lord Carrington. The reasons are twofold. In the first place, since that discussion took place the memoranda presented by the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of State for War have been laid before this House, and, in the next place, my object is not the same as that of my noble friend. In his speech, which from my humble point of view I thought very good, he entered into a great deal of polemical matter, a great deal of party recrimination, and said many things which, though extremely true, were more of a partisan character than I myself wish to introduce on the present occasion. In my judgment, the condition of affairs as set forth in the Papers before us is sufficiently critical without the admixture of any party matter; and indeed I may claim for my motion that it is one of those unimpeachable platitudes in which I am accustomed to revel. I recommended it privately to my noble friends on the Ministerial Benches as a motion for which they might vote with a clear conscience, and they acknowledged that they might do so. At least, I understood them to say so, for I do not pledge them to any unguarded utterances. But one, more cautious or more pawky than the rest, added—

> "I am not so sure that I can vote for the speech with which you will introduce the motion."

I am not without hopes that I can secure the support of many of my noble friends in the Government for the motion if I could take it to a division, and if the voting were by ballot; and I cannot help thinking that the views which I hope to present must have considerable support in the Government; and if I cannot claim any Member of the present Government as an avowed supporter of what I shall say, I can claim one of the most illustrious ex-Ministers, who has only recently left that august company, as one who will endorse—if I may use a word which Mr. Gladstone never allowed me to use while he was alive—every word that I shall say.

For the first part of my Motion I can claim the approval of noble Lords opposite. It is to approve the Council of National Defence. That is no very great concession on my part, because the germ of that Committee—the small and imperfect germ, I acknowledge—was laid in the late Government, when a small Committee was formed with the head of the Admiralty, the head of the War Office, and the First Minister of the day, to consider this matter in common. I hoped that, if the life of that Government had been prolonged, much more might have been developed out of that small nucleus; but, as your Lordships know, the life of that Government was troubled and short, and before we could arrive at any definite or more extensive arrangement of that Committee it had come to an end. As to the views expressed by the First Lord of the Treasury in expounding this system to the House, I find myself in absolute and complete agreement. I do not think there is any word said on that occasion with which I disagree. We do require a body such as a Council of National Defence to co-ordinate the various proposals which are made with reference to Army and Navy matters; to bring into one system the claims of the Army and Navy Departments; to present to Parliament, not jarring plans, but one comprehensive and well-considered scheme; and to ascertain what it is in the departments of naval and military affairs that we really require, and how we are to get it. If I were of a less sanguine nature I might be a little dispirited by the recollection of the last Council of National Defence. This new one is heralded with all the trumpetings and applause which it is possible to give to a project. But when I carry my mind back, I remember precisely the same things were said of the last Council of National Defence. If I were inclined to indulge in disputatious matter, it would afford me some pleasure to recall the article in *The Times* of July, 1895, which recorded the birth of the new Council, and to point out that it said exactly in praise of that Council what it now says in praise of the present. We lived under that Council for some years —at least, I presume we did—and the First Lord of the Treasury, who ought to know, says that in his opinion the old Council did much useful work. But, of course, that useful work was not apparent on the surface, and in any case a proposal for a new Committee of Defence implies that in the opinion of some Members of the Government some reform in that body was necessary.

The late Council did not manage to do what I hope the new Council will do—it did not co-ordinate the different demands of the War Office and the Admiralty, and it did not obtain for the Government a clear and consistent policy such as may be expected from the new, more efficient, more vigorous body. I will give two instances of what I mean. In the first place, the speeches made at the Colonial Conference by the Secretary of State for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty certainly appear to indicate a very considerable conflict of opinion as to the proper conditions of national defence; and the second instance was this. It was with reference to a name which I am afraid is seldom heard without a smile among the people of Great Britain. I mean Wei-hai-Wei. There was a policy formed by the late Government of taking Wei-hai-Wei and occupying it as a place of arms. There was a policy adopted later on which reversed the former policy and which made something else of Wei-hai-Wei. The First Lord of the Admiralty when the first policy was formed is now, I am happy to say, a Member of this House; and when the reversal of the policy was announced he not unnaturally expressed considerable scepticism as to the wisdom of that proceeding. He came down to the House, and I thought that he was about to take part in the debate with a view to criticising the reversal of his policy. But on reflection he did nothing of the kind. He explained that the Board of Admiralty which had reversed the policy did not contain a single individual who was on the Board by which the policy was originated, and he did not think, therefore, that any further explanation was necessary from him. Nor do I think any further explanation was necessary, because the noble Lord had nothing to do with the reversal. But we may at least hope that under this new Committee of National Defence we shall have no such reversals of policy in the course of a few years, and that we shall have no policies undertaken in such haste and repented with such leisure as the policy of occupying Wei-hai-Wei as a place of arms.

I referred to the article in *The Times* on the first Council of Defence, and there is one passage in that article with which I concur, and which seems somewhat inconsistent with the present proposals. If I am not mistaken, the Prime Minister is the President of the new Committee. *The Times*, in explaining the appointment of the noble Duke to the presidency of the old Council of Defence, said that it was not practicable for a Prime Minister, overburdened as he was, to preside over the meetings of this new Committee. I think the first idea of *The Times* was the right one. I think that the Prime Minister ought to be a member, and an active member when he is present, of the Committee. But if the presidency implies that he is to take part in all the meetings, and to remain throughout the proceedings, I am afraid it will very materially curtail their usefulness. How any one born of mortal parents can combine the duties of Leader of the House of Commons and of a real Prime Minister surpasses my comprehension; and how, in addition to all that, with all the labours which are put upon him, he can further undertake to preside over a Committee so vitally important as this is to me a matter of very considerable doubt and difficulty. The Prime Minister has been accused by Gentlemen on the Opposition side of the House of having done something in derogation of the Cabinet system in founding this Committee. I confess that I was rather amused when that accusation was brought, because precisely the same accusation was brought against me. I proposed—and I still think that it was a wise proposition, though I cannot say that I have found much external or expressed support for it—that Lord Kitchener should be placed in charge of the War Office, for the purpose of getting over the present condition of things, of putting our military system on a sound footing by putting our War Office on a sound footing, and of bringing to bear on this Department the ripe experience, the great organising power, and the signal ability which he has displayed in military operations in Africa. I was then told by the Prime Minister that I was upsetting the British Constitution. I confess that I had some difficulty in finding out how it was I was accomplishing this arduous feat. The Prime Minister said—

> "What would happen if Lord Kitchener made demands on the Chancellor of the Exchequer with which the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not disposed to comply?"

I have not been a member of many Governments, but I very much doubt whether any Minister has been at the head of a Department without being in that position; and in almost every case these difficulties are got over without the resignation of either of the Ministers concerned. What happens is this. The Minister whom the Cabinet supports gains the day, and the other Minister does not break up the Government by resignation. I am not disposed to take a side issue, but if the Chancellor of the Exchequer agreed to the demands of the present heads of Departments he would not be likely to demur to those of Lord Kitchener. Lord Kitchener is a man of frugal mind in public affairs, and I do not think that he would cause much uneasiness to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The next point raised was this. Would Lord Kitchener continue to be a member of the next Government when the Government which included him was out of office? That is a question I cannot answer; that would lie with the Minister who recommended the formation of the new Government. But I suppose if he found Lord Kitchener a useful Minister—and of that I have no doubt—he would be anxious to continue his services, and if he did not find him so, then he would be anxious to let him drop out. That is, I believe, not infrequently the case in all Governments. Then I was told that I would make Lord Kitchener a party man. I hope nothing will make him a party man. I think it would greatly neutralise his influence, and derogate from his high character in the eyes of the country. But my proposal was intended expressly to debar him from becoming a party man. He was only to be summoned to the Cabinet for the purposes of his own Department; and though, of course, he would be responsible for the acts of his own Department, like any other Minister in Parliament, he would not be in the same sense responsible for the remainder of the acts of the Government who are Members of the Cabinet. I was told that I was upsetting the British Constitution. It is no part of the British Constitution that a Cabinet Minister should be summoned to every Cabinet for every purpose. The Cabinet itself is not recognised by the British Constitution. It is an artificial arrangement. It has developed in silence in one direction, and may, before we are gone, develop in another. It constantly happened in the eighteenth century that Ministers were summoned for one particular purpose to the Cabinet, and not for another. I will give one instance which will be considered not inapplicable to the case of Lord Kitchener. The great Duke of Marlborough, the most consummate general England has ever possessed, was Master-General of Ordnance in the first Cabinet of George I.; but he was only summoned to the Cabinet for the purposes of his own Department. I admit that the Cabinet afterwards developed a greater closeness of responsibility, but I do not know why it should not develop back again in the direction which it took then; and that for what is obviously a temporary appointment, to meet a temporary exigency, the Government should not be enabled to take the great precedent of the Duke of Marlborough in favour of the course I suggest.

I leave that part of the subject to come to what I am afraid is the more contentious part of my Motion—the second part, which refers to the financial, naval, and military conditions of the country, and the hope that the new Council will as speedily as possible adjust our armaments to these conditions. I am afraid that may be taken as a reflection on what has already been done; and I cannot deny it is so. But when I look at these conditions of the country, I am inclined to think that they have not been sufficiently considered by those who framed the proposals now before Parliament. With regard to the financial condition of the Empire, I have some figures which I think are rather noteworthy. They are familiar to many of your Lordships, but in an argument of this kind they cannot be omitted. What I first ask you to remark is this We are not at this moment in a state of war, or in a state of collapse caused by a disastrous struggle. We are just emerging from a victorious war. And yet, so far as the people of this country are concerned, so far as the taxation of the country is concerned, the only result to our fellow-subjects in these islands is this—that the war seems to have been a machinery specially constructed in order to stereotype for all time a war taxation on the people of these islands. We were lured on during the war with great expectations as to the sums which were to be recovered from the conquered republics, and from the great mineral wealth which underlay their territories. We were led confidently to expect that we should recover £100,000,000 in this way. But what we have recovered, or shall recover when we get it, is £30,000,000, which I suspect will not cover more than the expenditure entailed by the peace, without going into the expenditure incurred by the war.

What is our financial condition? The Navy alone costs within £1,000,000 of what the two Services cost in 1894, the last complete year for which the Liberal party was responsible for the finances of this country. Since that time, since we resigned in 1895—I take it as a convenient epoch, not with the view of lauding the late Government, but I note, which is more significant, that the late Chancellor of the Exchequer takes this epoch in his review of the finances of the country—in those seven years the ordinary expenditure of the country has gone up at the rate of £5,500,000 a year. So that, whereas in 1894, which is earlier than the seven years, the expenditure was £94,000,000, it has now risen to £140,000,000. This is not a war expenditure, but a peace expenditure. Is this expenditure likely to diminish? I am quite aware that in some Departments the War Estimates may be taken to be temporary in their operation. I may be a pessimist, but I cannot see in the present system of administration the slightest hope for any reduction of expenditure. To-morrow night you are going to introduce a new Land Purchase Bill. I do not suppose that it will effect any great economy in your annual expenditure. You came into power in 1895 pledged to a scheme of old-age pensions. Whenever you can save some money from your present bloated expenditure the people to whom you have promised old-age pensions are not unlikely to remind you of that promise; and that, again, will not diminish your expenditure. I suppose the wealth of the country is increasing. We have no fixed figures on that point, no figures which we can trust. But though the wealth of the country may be increasing in the aggregate, I suspect the pinch of diminishing means is very largely felt throughout the nation. If that be so, it is not surprising that your debt, funded and unfunded, with all the capital charges upon you, is nearly £800,000,000 now, or where it was nearly forty years ago. So by your expenditure you have done away with the effects of forty years of frugality, of forty years of careful and arduous and self-sacrificing reduction of the Public Debt.

I am not bringing this as a charge against the Government. I am only bringing it forward to prove that the financial conditions under which we are living are not favourable to the Estimates which they are presenting to Parliament. Is your National Debt the only debt? You have to recognise that your municipal debt is near £300,000,000. I venture to say no one conversant with municipal affairs, or who has had anything to do them, as I have had both in the largest and in the smallest municipalities, will believe that that debt is likely to diminish, but rather to increase, and to increase by leaps and bounds. If that be so, it seems to me we have to settle down with the fixed and firm prospect of a permanent income tax of 1s., with bread-stuffs and coal in a permanent state of taxation. That is a state of things which, if it does not cause you any serious reflection, causes very serious searchings of heart in the constituencies. I do not, as a rule, dilate on bye-elections. I never know how far this House is entitled to touch on the sacred privileges of the other House; but at least I am sure that, though many people give you heroic reasons for this election and for that, there is one reason which, independent of local and district feeling, affects every election—your enormous expenditure and your oppressive taxation. I speak with little authority on the question of finance; but there is one who speaks with the highest authority —I mean Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. I regard the speech which Sir Michael Hicks-Beach made last October before going to India—I hope he may soon return with renewed vigour to make many more such speeches — as not merely by far the most remarkable speech ever made by a Minister on resigning control of the public purse after seven years of office, but also the gravest symptom of financial danger. Here is a man with fixed economic principles, with a character, it is said, capable of considerable power of resistance, who says that he has been fighting his colleagues on this question of expenditure day by day and hour by hour during the seven years which he has been Chancellor of the Exchequer, and without the faintest result. What, then, have we to hope? We were told by the last Prime Minister that one of the great difficulties in his path was the control of the Treasury. That means the control of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his Department. We hear a very different story from the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and if he, with all the power at his command, was unable to do more in keeping down the expenditure of the country, I ask you what have you to hope from the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, however able and experienced he may be, or from any of his successors, unless he pursues a very different course of action with regard to the spending of public funds?

One of the feelings which has most excited my mind by this contemplation is this—it is pity for the Government which will succeed this one. I do not know if any of my noble friends behind me aspire to form part of that Administration, but, if so, let them receive the assurance of my deepest and warmest sympathy. I cannot help thinking that it is not without a malicious foresight —a foresight which has not always, I must say, accompanied the action of the present Government — that they are spending so much money and leaving so little for their successors to spend. I can see how they will be able to say— not at first publicly, but always privately —"See what a skin-flint, nip-cheese, curmudgeonly Government this is which has succeeded to us! Think of the spacious days of Arthur and of Joseph —days when we revelled in expenditure and voted millions as though they were nothing, without control and amid the loud cheers of the House of Commons. If you want money disseminated in the country, call us back to power and get rid of these miserable creatures." There was a work which may be familiar to the younger generation among your Lordships, and not long ago was not unfamiliar to me, called "Mr. Sponge's Sporting Tour," and in that remarkable book there is an account of the family of the Earls of Scampersdale. The Earls of Scampersdale were a family which conducted its proceedings on the following principles:—One Lord Scampersdale spent and lived magnificently. The next Lord Scampersdale starved in order to make up the ravages of the first Lord Scampersdale, and to make preparations for the next magnificent Lord Scampersdale; and I cannot help fearing that in future the alternation of Conservative and Liberal Governments is to be based upon some such principle as this.

It was not always so. There was a time when the Tory party was the party of strict and capable finance and strict and capable economy. I am constrained to confess, looking back to history, that under the great Sir Robert Peel finance in this country was never more ably administered, and that it was he who, by his capacity and economy, managed to undo the condition into which our finance had fallen under the somewhat lax hands of Lord Melbourne. But here in this House we are not concerned with money; our only concern with taxes is to pay them; but I think we are, as far as my Motion is concerned, very materially concerned with the question of money. Money is the sinews of war. It was our money-bags that wore down the first Napoleon, and sorry indeed should I be to see these money-bags depleted. But I venture to say, on the authority of every economist who has studied the subject, that you are depleting the money-bags now, and, in the words, or equivalent words, of Sir Edward Grey—which I think admirably expressed the position—you are bleeding us to death in times of peace. That is the financial condition; and, as far as I know, the answer of the Government to the charge is this, "We cannot spend less." Both publicly and privately, I think, they hold that language, "We cannot spend less." Then, I say, our condition is parlous indeed. If we cannot spend less in time of peace it is impossible to predict what we should spend if we came to a really serious war; and as all armaments must really depend upon policy, sound policy cannot ignore finance. Well, my Lords, I pass from that branch of the subject to the naval conditions of policy as they exist at this time. As to that, I take it we are practically unanimous. We are all agreed that our policy is that of a maritime Empire, that the Fleet is our great weapon of offence and defence, that we must make it as perfect and as powerful as our brains and our money can make it, for, if that fails us, it is a matter of life and death. It is not thirty *corps d'armée*, it is not forty *corps d'armée*, that would redress the balance if the Fleet of Great Britain, through some calamity—which God avert!—were swept from the seas. These are principles which are held almost unanimously in this House, except, perhaps, by those who represent the War Office.

But there is one word I should like to say with respect to this matter, and it is that I think we are all agreed that we would not spare one shilling on the Navy Estimates to make the Fleet as efficient as possible. And I would go a step further than that. I believe in every shilling we give to the Navy, or the millions which the Navy claims, we are giving it to a department which will spend the money well. I know something of the present First Lord and his Board. I have seen them at work, and I have a well-founded belief that there is no more efficient—if I may use a word which I know stinks in the nostrils of His Majesty's Government—there is no more efficient department in his Majesty's service. They do their work thoroughly, and take the greatest pains in their power to arrive at the truth and act upon it; and greater praise no department could wish to have. It is on the question of military policy that I fear there is a discrepancy between the Government and the great mass of thinking people. I do not in the least pretend to represent the nation, or any section of the nation, in what I say; but I do believe that thoughtful men—civilians, like myself—who have no expert knowledge, are greatly alarmed at the military proposals of the Government. The particular point to which I call attention was tersely summarised by Mr. Brodrick in the speech which he made at the Colonial Conference, when he said—

> "We are prepared to send 120,000 Regular troops to any part of the British Empire which may be threatened."

Well, he had other figures; he had no less than 600,000 men at his disposal. These are very spacious figures. I do not know if the 600,000 men—or boys, I should say—exist; I am told they do not. But all I can say on that point is this—if they exist I scarcely know how you are going to employ them, and if they do not exist your Army Estimates are a great deal too high. But as regards the 120,000 men—the three *corps d'armée*, as they are usually called—the striking force, I am very anxious to know their purport and their *raison d'être.* Both Houses of Parliament have in vain endeavoured to try to find the ground on which this great force is to be maintained by the country. Mr. Brodrick told us that it was not a force kept for ambitious schemes or offensive operations, or for an attempt to involve ourselves in the great quarrels of our neighbours in Europe. Well, I am very glad to learn that; 120,000 men would be perfectly futile if they were so intended. But what is it they are intended for? If they are intended to be sent to any part of the Empire at a moment's notice, to protect any colony or dependency of the Empire, one consideration at once presents itself, which is this—that if the country were at war the colonies would be at war, and every colony which knew you had 120,000 men ready to send out to its defence would simultaneously claim the advantage of this contingent. I do not believe for a moment that this Army is wanted for colonial defence. If we have learned one thing more than another from the Boer War, it is that the powers of defence are much greater than the powers of attack, and that any, even a great military nation would think twice and thrice before they attacked a British colony which was defended by its own Militia and Volunteers.

Then we come—having, as I said, pressed for explanation at every point—to the last which was offered by the Prime Minister, and which I think has since been withdrawn—though I am not clear upon that point—I mean that they should be sent for the defence of the North-west Frontier of India. I think it is highly inconvenient to discuss these hypothetical contingencies, which I trust may never occur, and which I do not believe will ever occur, but which, at any rate, give an unpleasant taste to the discussions of Parliament. But I will venture to point out that if you were at war with Russia you would probably be at war with France also, and that, even conceding that the Admiralty were able to assemble a great fleet of transports by which we could move 120,000 men from these shores to India and guard them against the French fleet on their way, preserving at the same time the protection of our own shores, and going round, as you would be obliged to go round, by the Cape of Good Hope, you would take thirty-six days at least to get to the point where you might hope to be of some use for the protection of India; and, at the rate at which wars move in these days, you would be much too late. As a matter of fact, if you wish to defend India, and if you think your means of doing so inadequate, it is infinitely better to strengthen your Indian Army than to rely upon any possible contingents from England, such as the three *corps d'armée* which would be kept for that purpose. Having extracted from the Government every possible explanation they can give of the use and necessity for these three Army Corps, I must confess that we still remain in a state of ignorance on the subject. I do not know whether any speaker in the House of Lords will be more generous and liberal in his explanation to-night, but, if so, I am sure the whole country will hear his statement with interest. In making these remarks I hope it is not considered that I am animated by any wish unduly to criticise the Secretary of State for War. If that appears on the surface of my remarks, it is certainly not in their spirit. I believe him to be an able and industrious Minister—I know him to be an industrious Minister—and though I have not made it a secret either from him or others that I believe Lord Kitchener would make a more efficient War Minister than himself at the present time, I do not think that has produced any feeling of rancour in his mind.

I regard the differences which separate us from the War Minister as three in number. In the first place he thought it was necessary to meet a Parliamentary exigency by bringing forward a scheme of Army reform four months after he had entered office, before he could in any respect have received and garnered the experiences of our Army in South Africa, and, instead of setting to work even with the then Council of National Defence to plan a deliberate scheme which would stand the test of time and circumstance, he chose to produce a scheme which has stood the stress of neither, and which has met, outside the ranks of Party, with very general criticism and condemnation. The next difference we have with him is this—that in his project of Imperial defence he ignores, and avowedly ignores, the Navy. That is *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark indeed. I ask your attention to the very remarkable words which he used in introducing his scheme of Army reform in 1901. He said—

> "In the first place, when we talk of home defence, let us not confuse our minds by considering the position and action of the Navy."

Well, I am afraid that, if confusion of mind is attendant on all those who connect these two things, we are the most muddle-headed nation in existence, because I have never heard of any human being except the Secretary of State on that occasion—and I hope he has repented of his words at leisure—who would think of considering the position of our national defence by clearing his mind of all reference to the Navy. But the third point on which we differ from the right hon. Gentleman is in some respects more important still. He seems to me to confuse quantity with quality. Now what is it that we should aim at in our military preparations? I venture to think that it is quality and not quantity. We cannot hope with a voluntarily recruited Army to vie with the great military nations of Europe in quantity, but let us at least try to vie with them in quality. If we cannot rival them in numbers, at any rate let us have an Army which, man for man, will show against any *corps d'armée* which they have. Of course I do not say that, if you could afford it, the power to put a million, or half a million, of trained soldiers in the field at a moment's notice would not add very considerably to your strength and power. But as a matter of fact you cannot afford it, and no nation that has to keep such a Navy as ours can hope to afford it; and, as you must cut your coat according to your cloth, it seems to me to be absolutely necessary that you should curtail the numbers of your Army.

My opinion in this matter is one of very little value, but I am supported by several authorities; and I should like to quote the most recent of these authorities, because it is the opinion of a gallant soldier whom we are proud to number as a Member of this House. I mean Lord Methuen. Lord Methuen, in distributing prizes to Volunteers on Saturday, made use of these expressions—

> "What we want is quality, not quantity. We require a small Army, but behind it we need a large army of Yeomanry, Militia, and Volunteers."

Coming as it does from Lord Methuen, a trained soldier who has so ardent a feeling for the Army, and who must have gathered more of the lessons of South Africa than any, except perhaps a dozen, other generals in the field, I think that opinion is entitled to the utmost weight and the highest consideration. He asks for a small, efficient, striking Army, and a great defensive reserve. What is that defensive reserve? My Lords, it is the nation itself. It is the duty and the prerogative of the nation to defend the national territory. It is the historical tradition of this country that the nation should defend the national territory. In what way the nation may exercise its undoubted right to call, in the words of the old Statute, on every freeman capable of bearing arms to rise in the defence of the country is a matter for the discrimination of the nation itself, whether it be by Militia, or by Yeomanry, or by Volunteers, or by rifle clubs, or by any other method which the wit of man may devise. That is the historical practice of this country. I was reading the other day a reprinted tract of the Tudor times which gives a remarkable picture of the position of affairs under Queen Elizabeth. It says—

> "As for able men for service, thanked be God, we are not without good store, for by the musters taken in 1574 and 1575 our numbers amounted to 1,172,674 men."

I suppose the population of England at that time did not amount to five millions; and it does seem a prodigious estimate that at that time, when there was a dread of invasion, there should have been able to be placed on the muster roll of England not less a number than nearly 1,200,000 men.

I know very well that in making this allusion I shall hear people who are not very wise say that I am making an insinuation in favour of conscription. I am not making any insinuation of the kind. Conscription is a melancholy and arduous burden laid upon the great European States by reason of their conterminous frontiers, and by their mutual armed exertions. This nation, which has not these frontiers, would never undertake that burden, except under the pressure of some overwhelming national calamity in which they might think that even forced military service was preferable to the terrors of that calamity. If you do have conscription it will be by maintaining the scheme of the War Office now before Parliament. The demand that that scheme makes for recruits is no less than 50,000 annually. You have got this year an exceptionally good recruiting year, 50,700. Out of these I think there are over 8,000 who are "specials" or otherwise inefficient, and belong to classes of recruits which the War Minister has promised not to admit into the service again. Therefore, if you have as good a recruiting year next year as you have had this year, you will still be 8,000 short of the number required to complete the War Minister's scheme. If this goes on one of two things will happen—either your scheme must break down, or you must resort to enforced military service; and that is the only danger of conscription that I see in the future of these Islands. I know another word that will be used in reference to my remarks; it has been used before with equally little justification; it is the reproach of militarism. I do not know in the least what militarism means, but it is a phrase that is used against any one who seeks to put the forces of this country on an efficient footing. I do not know that Switzerland is a country which is much accused of militarism. It has no standing army, and in that respect, at any rate, it evades the charge. It has a population of over 3,300,000. What are its defensive armaments? They are no less than 518,000 men, or one out of every six of the inhabitants. Switzerland has not yet, so far as I know, been accused of militarism. Yet it raises this prodigious force in order to defend its territory on the understanding and on the axiom that the duty of the nation is to defend its own territory. Switzerland is not so well placed as we are. It has no fleet; it has nothing but land frontiers. And yet what nation, however great it may be in power or in military resources, would ever think of attacking Switzerland? Switzerland is safe because its population is organised for its defence.

Lord NEWTON: By compulsion.

The Earl of ROSEBERY: Quite true: The noble Lord has interposed an observation which is perfectly sound. But if a democratic community like Switzerland thinks it right to put on compulsion in defence of its territory, it is obvious that there is nothing particularly unsound in asking this country, without compulsion, to call upon the great mass of the nation for its support. Take the case of the United States. The United States is not, I suppose, a nation which is liable to militarism; yet it is part of the law and Constitution of the United States that every State (I suppose also under compulsion if it came to the worst) is bound to maintain as a militia every male capable of bearing arms between 18 and 44 years of age; and although undoubtedly that militia has fallen into desuetude, the reason is extremely simple. It is because, with all its vast population and resources and its utter remoteness from any military Power, an attack on the United States for purposes of aggression is almost beyond the field of possibility. My Lords, I say that these are instances which show that not merely is the defence of the nation carried out by the nation itself, the national and the historical method in this country, but it is also the democratic method elsewhere. I know what the noble Lord opposite means when he alludes to compulsion, but I assure him that I have no idea of compulsion in my head. Suppose a compulsory force, raised on the principles of the Swiss, in which one man out of every six inhabitants was recognised as forming part of the defensive force of the country. Why, you would have an Army of seven millions in this country to maintain.

Lord NEWTON: You would not be obliged to take them all.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: No, but the Swiss do take them all. It is because I do not wish us to take them all that I do not wish to resort to the principle of compulsion.

LORD NEWTON: You will not get them otherwise.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: The noble Lord says you would not get them otherwise. That is where I differ from the noble Lord. I firmly believe that you will get them otherwise. I firmly believe that any Government which appeals to the nation on the sacred duty of the nation to defend its own territory against the possibility of foreign aggression, would meet with a response such as would surprise our present rulers, and would enable them to place the defence of our Islands on a far sounder footing than it is now on. My Lords, if you wish to call upon the nation to raise Militia, Volunteers, and Yeomanry to take their part in the defence of these shores, you must pursue a very different course than that which you have been pursuing. You must not starve, you must not discourage, you must not look with disfavour on these Auxiliary forces; you must foster them; you must encourage them; you must see that they are not out of pocket by their exertions. Let every form of Ministerial and social, aye, and I would add Royal favour be shown them; and I believe that you will soon have in existence a Volunteer Army, a Militia, and a Yeomanry adequate to, and exceeding, the utmost necessities of the defence of your territory. My Lords, these are the views which I place before you with great humility and with great diffidence. I am aware that on these subjects I am neither a naval, nor a military, nor a financial expert. I lay them before you as none of these; but I do offer them as the opinion of a common citizen, of a common Imperialist, and a common taxpayer; and, if I may add the words, as a matter of common sense.

Moved to resolve that this House desires to express its approval of the proposed Council for National Defence, and its earnest hope that the first efforts of that Council may be directed to the adjustment of the national armaments of the naval, military, and financial conditions of the Empire.—(The Lord Rosebery (*E. Rosebery.*)

VISCOUNT GOSCHEN: My Lords, I am sure no member of your Lordships' House will for one moment complain of the tone which the noble Lord who has just sat down has adopted. He has explained to us the motive which actuated him in bringing this subject before the House. From the first to the last of his speech he has acted up to the professions he made at the commencement. He has excluded, as he told us he wished to exclude, all party spirit, and I am glad to think that there is much in what he said in which not only this House but all parties will concur. I am anxious to say something with reference to the Committee of Defence; and before asking some questions of His Majesty's Government with reference to that Committee, I should like to remind the House and the public of the degree in which there was co-ordination between the naval and military authorities before the constitution of the National Defence Committee. I think it right to say that there has not been that absence of any kind of consultation or co-operation between the naval and military authorities which the public seems to believe, and sometimes has been told, has been the case in the past. It should not be thought that past Administrations have proceeded in a hugger-mugger fashion and not taken pains to secure such co-operation as was possible between the Army and the Navy. The first Defence Committee, established in 1856, was mainly an Army Committee, in which there were four or five military officers, and only the First Sea Lord to represent the Naval Board. By 1890 there were on it seven military officers and only two naval officers. Then it was recognised by the Committee that naval views were not sufficiently expressed, and there was created what exists to this day—namely, a joint Naval and Military Committee, which is composed of four Naval officers and four military officers. Formerly the secretary used to be an Army man and the assistant secretary a Naval man. Now there are joint secretaries—one the

Director of Naval Intelligence and the other the Director of Military Intelligence.

The House may ask what has been done by this Joint Committee, of which the public do not seem ever to have heard. They have dealt with much; but they have dealt with it in silence; and the misfortune of the present day is that all work that is done quietly, and of which the Press knows little, seems to be considered as non-existent. I fervently trust that when the new Defence Committee is fully at work, when once the public has been informed of its constitution and its intentions, it may be allowed also, without public inquiry into every scheme, to work quietly and with confidence that the work is being done, without any self-advertisement on the part of any of those who are upon it. The joint Naval and Military Board examined the fortifications all round the island. They went into schemes of defence for every port of the United Kingdom. They examined the schemes of defence of every port in our colonies. These schemes all exist, and they have been made by the joint efforts of the naval and military authorities; and when this new Committee was established the Director of Naval Intelligence and the naval adviser to the Inspector-General of Fortifications, with the military adviser, visited all the commercial ports, and the joint Naval and Military Committee examined the schemes for regulating the traffic in time of war, for regulating the control of the mines at the ports, for the regulation of lighthouses—in fact, did all they could with reference to defining the respective positions of the Army and Navy in the defence of these islands and of the colonies. There was, besides, a Colonial Defence Committee at work with the Joint Committee; so that the whole scheme of defence has been considered carefully by them together in the past. Then there is an officer, who dates back as far as 1884, who is called the naval adviser to the Inspector-General of Fortifications. This is a naval officer of substantial rank, picked invariably from the ablest men of the Navy, who is a kind of representative of the Admiralty on a number of War Office Committees, and he lives in constant relations with the Director of Naval Intelligence. He represents, so to speak, the eyes of the Director of Naval Intelligence. I should be glad to know how far the labours of the Joint Naval and Military Committee will be superseded, if at all, by the work of the new Defence Committee. I do not think it need be entirely superseded, and I hope the new Committee will avail itself of its labours. I hope I have not abused your Lordships' patience by giving this short *résumé* of what has been done in the past; but I thought it due to the naval and military authorities of those days, and also to those who are working the system at the present time, to give some information which, I believe, has never been so fully given to the public before on this matter.

Then we come to the last Cabinet Defence Committee. The noble Earl referred to the comparative failure of that Committee; but he also quoted the words of the Prime Minister to the effect that much good work had been done by it. I know that, because I myself had the greatest possible advantage from conferring with the members of the Committee. Many questions were brought before that Committee with great advantage; but it did not undertake that which the new Committee is to undertake, namely, a survey of the whole of the forces of the Navy and the Army together and take into consideration the cost of the two services and the relation of that cost to the financial situation of the day. The noble Earl hoped that such changes of policy as took place in the case of Wei-hai-Wei would not take place under the new Defence Committee. Well, I might almost say that in some cases I hope such a change may take place—that is, if there is a change in the situation. I thought the noble Earl was aware that there were certain international changes in the Far East which distinctly modified the position of Wei-hai-Wei. Such changes of policy may happen under the new system, because all the members of the Committee are not going to be permanent. There will be new naval lords, and it will always be possible that the new ones may not take the same view as their predecessors. But there will be one great advantage in the new Committee from the fact that reasoned documents, as the Prime Minister called them, will be kept.

In regard to the constitution of the new Defence Committee, I am not sure that I agree with what the noble Earl said as to the Prime Minister. I agree that the Prime Minister is overburdened with work; but I think, and I say it from experience, that you want the private, compulsory, coercive pressure of the Prime Minister to make this Defence Committee thoroughly workable. Again, I think that the Foreign Minister ought to be a constant member of the Committee—that he should not be a member called in, as the Prime Minister said, when his advice and opinion are wanted, but that he should practically be a party from the very beginning to the discussion of the important questions which come before the Committee. If I were First Lord of the Admiralty or Secretary of State for War, one of my first questions on the Defence Committee would be addressed to the Foreign Minister. I should say, "Tell me what your policy is, and when I know that I shall be able to judge what ships I require." There are a number of questions which the Foreign Minister ought to be able to answer before the Defence Committee. For instance, what, in given circumstances, would be the attitude of neutrals? What combinations of Powers do you expect? Do you consider that we ought to take into consideration the possibility of an alliance here or there? And, if so, should that alliance be supported by any troops or ships? All those are questions of foreign policy as much as of naval or military policy. Then such questions as the right of search, the rights of neutrals, what is and what is not contraband of war, ought to go before the Committee. All those questions must affect the number of cruisers and generally the size of the Navy Estimates. Take again such a question as the Mediterranean. What is the policy as regards Egypt and as regards the Suez Canal? These questions must all be examined. Of course, these questions were examined under the old system by personal communication between the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Secretary for War, and the Foreign Minister; but if you take a certain amount of responsibility from them as regards the Estimates, then the Foreign Minister, in my judgment, ought to be one of the most important members of the Committee of Defence. If it is pleaded, and properly pleaded, that he could not, with his work, always be present, I would put it this way—that he should generally be present and only absent when business arose with which he was not necessarily concerned, rather than that he should be generally absent and only present when his presence was directly requested.

Then comes the question whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer should be a member. I have myself been at one time Chancellor of the Exchequer and at another First Lord of the Admiralty, and I know what the relations between the two always must be. I have cross-examined, and have been cross-examined, as to the volume of the Estimates; and the conclusion I have come to after that experience is that the authority of a man who hears the case from the beginning, and is able to watch the progress of the policy adopted, must always be superior to the authority of those who are not present and are only brought in occasionally. Therefore, I would suggest that the Chancellor of the Exchequer also should be a member of the Committee, especially in view of the present financial situation. I agree with a good deal of what fell from the noble Earl on that point, and I will not deny that the picture he has drawn is a most serious one. But if that be so, at all events let the Chancellor of the Exchequer have the fullest possible opportunity of seeing the development of the Estimates in the same manner as the other members of the Committee. Then I would ask, Is there to be voting in this Committee? I have seen the word "decisions." I think myself it would be very awkward to have it, for it would almost be necessary that the chief professional adviser of a Minister might not vote with him. Suppose they had had a friendly conflict. Four battleships might have been asked for; three might ultimately have been settled upon after considerable discussion. Would the professional adviser be entitled to raise that question again in the Defence Committee and argue it out? I do not wish to have any precise answer to this question, but I think the action of the Committee should rather be consultative than decisive. Every

Minister will admit that the First Lord of the Admiralty must continue to be the responsible officer with regard to the Estimates, and that no decision of the Defence Committee or of the Cabinet ought to weaken that responsibility. In times of peace the public wishes everybody to be consulted; in times of war, when disasters occur, the public wishes one man to be hung. It wants to know who is responsible. It is difficult to find who is responsible, but this is a question the public always asks, and I hope that, in working out the general organisation of the Defence Committee, the question of responsibility will be most carefully kept in view. I also hope that the meetings of the Committee will be kept as private as possible, that no call will be made to publish all their proceedings, and that the Committee will be treated as a Cabinet Committee in all the essentials of secrecy. I leave others to determine how far it would be possible to admit Lord Kitchener to the Cabinet with a limited liability. It would be a vast constitutional change to take a great soldier and put him in that position without any financial control.

I pass to the question of the chief business of the Defence Committee, and that is dealt with in the second part of the noble Earl's Motion. Admitting that the financial position is such that it behoves the Government to ask for nothing that is not absolutely indispensable, it is not the opinion of one Minister, however eminent, that can determine that the expenditure incurred was unnecessary. I have had friendly arguments with Sir Michael Hicks Beach; but I know that, if I had not spent on the Navy that which was spent during the five years I was in office I should have been held responsible for letting down the Navy, in respect of which the noble Earl says that at no cost must there be any stint. I believe that the great attack which was first made on Mr. Brodrick's Army Corps Scheme arose from a fear that the Navy would be stinted because the Army had so much. The youthful and informal Defence Committee of the House of Commons feared that the money which ought to go to the Navy would be diverted to the Army. But when the Navy Estimates appeared I do not think that anyone said that the Navy had been stinted. There was an increase of £3,250,000, and I was struck with the confidence of the noble Lord in believing that the money he asked for would be voted. It was well illustrated in the able statement with which he accompanied the Estimates, and in which he simply mentions that there is an increase of £3,250,000. It was not necessary to say more; and the Secretary to the Admiralty, who might have explained the causes of the increase to the House of Commons, simply said that it resulted from the rivalry of other Powers. I am glad that my noble friend was able to be so reticent. It is most satisfactory that the same pressure is not applied to him that is applied to the Secretary of State for War to explain *coram populo* all the circumstances which make an increase of the Army necessary. My noble friend is happy in being able to refer only to the general situation. People ask why we have gone beyond the two-Power standard which has hitherto been considered sufficient. In proportion as other nations increase their navies, though they are not likely to be ranged against you in actual warfare, any prudent Government must take into account their existence. You have to assert your rights against neutrals; and the South African War was enough to teach us that in time of war most troublesome questions may arise with neutrals. It would be an unsatisfactory position for this country if, when it was engaged in a life and death struggle with two Powers, it had no ships to watch those neutrals who might raise difficult questions. The great developments of other fleets have made it necessary to increase to this vast extent our own naval preparations.

I now come to the most controversial part of the noble Earl's speech—whether it is necessary to have the large military preparations involved in Mr. Brodrick's scheme. As to the three Army Expeditionary Corps, the noble Earl instanced the defence of India and the colonies as the purpose of them. It has never been suggested that 120,000 men were to be sent merely for the defence of a colony. That was never for a moment the intention. As regards India, I do not agree with the noble Earl; and I think that the public would be much misled if, without seeing the documents upon which the Government found their policy, and without hearing the views of such eminent men as Lord Roberts, who is profoundly acquainted with the situation in India, they were to believe that the troops might not be required for India. The noble Earl says that it would take the reinforcements thirty-six days to get to India, and that they would not arrive in time. But the Russian Army would have long and tedious marches to make, and I am not sure that our troops would not be there in perfectly good time. While admitting that it was unpleasant to discuss such matters, the noble Earl challenged the Government to say why they wanted these 120,000 men. I can imagine numbers of cases in which they might want them; and the noble Earl gave the go-by to the powerful argument of the Prime Minister with regard to the necessity of having troops to support the Navy. The Navy, as the Prime Minister said, can only carry operations to a certain point, and after that you require troops to ensure your success. Ships can only silence forts. They cannot take them. Those who have read the history of the Napoleonic wars may remember how Nelson, St. Vincent, and others clamoured for troops. Not only that, but surely every coaling station and every naval base belonging to an enemy ought to be attacked; for what would be the attitude of the public if our ships were simply to hold the fleets of the enemies in check? There are many military operations which have been considered. I know that troops would be wanted for this place and that, and it would be most indiscreet to name them, but many of them might occur to anyone who goes thoroughly into the question. You want your troops abroad not only for India but for the defence of other lines which are conterminous with foreign countries, and we want them in order to ensure the success of the Navy. A large force is wanted if we can possibly afford it, not for any fanciful operation, but to carry out some of the operations which early in the war ought to be undertaken. While, therefore, entirely in favour of the Navy, I do not wish to see the country crippled for the want of the necessary troops which even the South African War has shown us to be necessary.

I turn now to the question of a citizen army, which is to hold the country against invasion. I agree that every kind of inducement should be given to the people to come forward as Yeomen, infantry, and Militia. But the point is this, whether you can absolutely trust a citizen army without a certain mixture of veteran troops to stiffen the force. I believe that no military officer has yet come forward to say that we ought to rely on the Auxiliary forces alone. The question is thus reduced to the amount of Regular troops that are wanted; and if I read aright the Army Corps system of the Government the number of Regular troops is something like 25,000 to 30,000 men. Are 30,000 Regulars too much to stiffen the Auxiliary forces in time of war? Though the Navy ought to be responsible for the defence of our shores and to maintain command of the sea, yet there may be naval raids and disasters full of dangers and risks. You must also count on the attitude of the populace; and I believe that the country would be alarmed if all the Regular troops had left the country, and the whole defence was to be left to a citizen Army alone. Discipline and training have to count for something. It was said that a small and good Army was wanted. What is a small Army? I should say that 30,000 Regulars mixed with 100,000 Volunteers was a small Army, and I would endeavour to get it as good as possible. But whatever the size of the citizen Army may be, hold out every inducement to bring the men forward, but until you have got it do not begin to diminish the number of troops. Let every effort be made to establish, equip, and train the Auxiliary forces, make every effort to get your Reserves into order, and then the Government would be prepared to reconsider the number of troops which may be required. In view, however, of the present state of Europe, the advances which the Powers have made, the state of fermentation going on in so many quarters, I feel that if the Government came forward now to diminish our defensive forces they would make a mistake. I come forward not because I think the Government require any support from me, but having been myself at the Admiralty, and knowing what the Navy can do, I believe the present scheme of the Government is more advantageous than any diminution at present in the Regular forces of the Crown.

THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH: My Lords, it is not often that I find myself in agreement with the noble Earl opposite, but I do think that on this occasion he has rendered a real public service in bringing before your Lordships' House a Motion which is so general, and I think I may also say, uncontroversial in its character. It would be a pity if in this House a question of Imperial defence, of the amount of money we can afford to pay for our Army and Navy, was not properly or adequately discussed, for at the present moment this is a subject which is anxiously occupying the attention of people in the country. The subject has been debated in the other House of Parliament, and military and naval experts are exercising their minds to an unusual degree upon it; and, moreover, many men who have hitherto left the discussion of these matters to experts are to-day studying for themselves the question of national defence, and are trying to judge it by the standard of everyday practical consideration. That is all the more reason why I rejoice that the noble Earl below the Gangway refrained entirely from those somewhat disturbing and bitter elements which are the legacy of the South African War, and placed this discussion on a calm and dispassionate level. It has often been said that the question of Imperial Defence is not a party matter, that it is above party consideration, and I think I detected in the words of the noble Earl in moving this Resolution that he rather agreed with that point of view.

This is a subject concerning the welfare, not only of people in this country, but also of people outside in our colonies and dependencies who I do not think care very much for our party machinery or party opinions. I think it would be wrong, therefore, if we could not approach the discussion of these matters in this House except from a party point of view. It cannot have escaped your Lordships' attention that there is a growing volume of doubt and anxiety throughout the country on the part of people who until recently have found themselves in agreement with His Majesty's Government and have given them loyal and true support, but who feel that to-day the amount of money we are spending upon our Imperial defence is beyond what we can afford, that a great deal of that which is expended does not yield a proportionate return, and that the taxation of the country is weighing so heavily on all classes of the taxpayers that at no very distant date there must be an outbreak of great discontent and dismay. I do not think I have overstated the case. There have been protests—bitter protests—in the House of Commons on the part of those who are usually supporters of His Majesty's Government, and whatever noble Lords may think of those protests, no one will doubt that they emanate from those who are actuated by the highest sense of public duty. Then, again, articles and letters have appeared in the Press, asking that this excessive taxation should be reduced. Notably there has been a series of articles in *The Times*—articles which I think everybody admits have been very ably written—and I do not think they altogether support the policy of His Majesty's Ministers. So much for outside opinions. Then there is the testimony of one whom I do not think we can possibly ignore on this occasion; in fact, the noble Earl alluded to a speech he made on the question of the finances of this country, and the amount of money we were spending. I refer to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. My noble friend who has just spoken said we should not pay too much attention to the opinion of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, but I pay just as much attention to the opinion of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I hold that it is just as valuable, as I do to the opinion of the noble Viscount, and I will tell him why. It is because he, as well as the noble Viscount, has been for years past, on account of his official position, able to have before him all the secret information upon which the policy of the Government to-day is largely founded, and I think therefore we should have the highest regard for the opinion of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach.

I should like to read what he said on this subject—

> "Even with proper allowance for the services in South Africa there might easily be a reduction in our Military Estimates if the War Office properly expended the people's money."

I think it would be an injustice to the people of this country to say that they begrudge the money which is really required for the service of the State; but if there are a large number of His Majesty's subjects who believe that a great deal more money is being spent than is absolutely necessary, that some of that money does not yield a proportionate return, then I fear, in view of the great expenditure which the country is called upon to bear to-day, that that may easily pave the way for a dangerous and parsimonious reaction in the future.

I think it would be an exaggeration to say that our trade has suffered by the late war in South Africa, or that the well-being of the people has been affected; but I do not think anybody can regard our financial position without having two conclusions forced upon his mind—that there is no available margin of taxation at the present moment for any needs of the future, unless, on the one hand, you resort to maintaining the income tax at a figure which is cruel to the poorer classes of the income tax-payers, or, on the other hand, you resort to indirect taxation upon the necessaries of life. While to-day our annual expenditure is at a higher figure than it has ever been before in the history of this country, our finances are not so good. Our Consols stand at 91—a point lower than they have ever been for the last thirty or forty years. I think there is no better proof of the immense reserve of wealth that there was in this country before the South African War—wealth which had accumulated owing to quiet and careful Governments of the past—than the fact that we were able to carry on that campaign for three years without seriously interfering with the comforts and the convenience of the people of this country. The security of our financial position was such that we were able to make those exertions without any serious danger and subsequent evil consequence. Our financial position to-day is very different from what it was then, and we cannot better gauge our position and the change that has been effected than by considering what would be our position if to-morrow we were engaged upon a conflict as onerous and as severe as that in South Africa. There is no margin for a war tax. The income tax is to-day 1s. 3d., and I think I am right in saying that every penny you put on to it means a less proportionate return.

Then, my Lords, imagine for one moment the effect on our credit. As I have already said, Consols stand at 91, and we shall find that it will be increasingly expensive if we have to borrow money. We took up loans for the South African War of £159,000,000, and we got £152,500,000, but to-day, if we wished to borrow this sum, we would have to pay £9 for every £100 borrowed, and the result would be that if we borrowed £150,000,000 the amount we would get would be less than £140,000,000. I think it is quite clear, therefore, even assuming that Consols do not fall lower, that it would be very easy to have much financial trouble in the City, which would find its reaction in the industrial centres in England. I should like to give an historical illustration which I think is not inappropriate. Your Lordships will remember the war with the American Colonies. At that time England, by the loss of those colonies, was supposed to have received one of the greatest blows to her military prestige that any country had ever received, and our rival, France, triumphed and was overjoyed at our dismay. But in a very few years, although England suffered a great military defeat, she was able, by careful and quiet manipulation under the able administration of the great Minister of that day, to restore her finances to a good condition. France, on the other hand, although she was the victor in the struggle, placed her finances in such a hopeless and terrible condition that trouble arose between the classes in that country, the Government of the day could not decide whether to tax the rich or the poor, and the result of this financial embarrassment was the French Revolution. I think this illustration is a very appropriate one, and shows that, although armaments are very important to a country, yet its financial position is a matter which its Statesmen cannot afford to neglect any more than they can afford to disregard the equipment of the Navy or the Army.

It has often been said that want of money never stopped a war. It is quite true that want of money never stopped one country from invading another, or one nationality from protecting itself against invasion from another; but I do not think that these are the kind of wars we are likely to be engaged in. The want of money for an oversea war like the South African War is certainly likely to be seriously felt, for on these occasions you want vast sums for the purchase of stores, ammunition, remounts, and all the different paraphernalia associated with a great military expedition. I contend that for the successful operation of this kind of war the finances of the country must be in such a position that the Government of the day can impose a war tax which can be easily collected, and which will not weigh too heavily upon the people. Therefore a financial reserve is not less vital, not less important, and not less imperative than the efficiency of either our Army or our Navy. I cannot pretend to be an expert in these matters, nor do I wish to approach the discussion of them in any way in a spirit hostile to the noble Earl who represents the War Office in this House, but I gather that we have not nearly reached the full and ultimate cost if the present Army Corps Scheme holds good. The normal Estimates for the Army are £27,500,000 this year, but next year and the year after many items will come in, and, as far as I can gather, will help to increase that amount. We have to look to increased expenditure in the cost of battle, in the augmented pay of the soldier, and, above all, to the fact that the cost of the Army must rise in proportion as the number of men contemplated by the War Office are realised. According to the present Army scheme, if its full conclusion is arrived at, you require 70,000 Reservists, 22,000 more Militia, 17,000 more Yeomanry, and 100,000 more Volunteers, the total pay of whom comes to something like £2,000,000 of money. The noble Earl the Under Secretary of State for War dissents. Obviously he is in possession of facts and figures which I cannot dispute. But this much I will say, that we have every reason to suppose that during the next two financial years the Estimates for the Army will certainly be in excess of what they are to-day.

Briefly, my argument is this, that the position of our Imperial Defence depends upon three units—our Army, our Navy, and our War Chest; that after having satisfied the requirements of the Navy, the balance of the expenditure we can afford is the amount which we should devote to the Army; that to-day the two services are absorbing a sum of money which to a large extent destroys the possibility of a war fund; that the three weapons we fight with being the Army, the Navy, and the War Chest, the two former are fast absorbing the latter, and that the Government have robbed the financial Paul in order to pay the military Peter.

Turning to the question of the Committee of National Defence, I rejoice to know that this Committee is to be placed on a more real and permanent basis. One cannot help feeling that this Committee can either be of an enormous benefit to the country, or, on the other hand, a positive danger. If it is only to ratify the decisions which the Cabinet have already arrived at, and to be a sort of block-house where those who are responsible for unwise decisions can seek immunity from attack, then, instead of being a benefit, it will be a source of danger to the country. I am told that the Prime Minister is deeply interested in the formation of this Committee. I hope that may be the case; but what the country asks, and what I venture to think your Lordships will ask, is that this Committee should frankly, readily and entirely consider the whole position of our Imperial Defence from its strategic and economic standpoint, and that they should not approach the question in a formal way, as Governments are somewhat prone to do, and with a preconceived intention of finding themselves right, but that they should approach it from the beginning with the critical and impartial mind of a new investigator. With profound respect I say this to the noble Duke the Leader of the House, that unless he can satisfy us that such a course of action is really his intention, I see no reason why we should not support the noble Earl in the Motion he has laid before the House.

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (the Earl of SELBORNE): My Lords, the noble Earl who introduced this Motion has frequently pointed out how much he wished to be a supporter of His Majesty's Government if His Majesty's Government would only give him the chance. I now understand why the noble Earl left the House the other day before he knew whether we were going to divide, because the Motion then brought forward by Lord Carrington was a Vote of Censure. I gather from reading the Motion now before the House that it is really a Vote of Confidence in the Government for having at last supplied the country with a piece of constitutional machinery which has been too long lacking. I agree with so much that the noble Earl has said that I am almost sorry to have to point out that, if this machinery has been so long lacking, and I agree with him that it has, there are only three men living who have had the opportunity of supplying this want. Public opinion has been largely educated in this matter by the work of the noble Duke who leads this House. It was his work on the Commission that bears his name that first focussed public opinion on this question, and he has taken a leading and distinguished part in it since. But the three men living who had the opportunity of carrying it into effect are the present Prime Minister, who has established the Committee of National Defence which we are now discussing; the late Prime Minister, who started the Committee of Defence at which the noble Earl has never wearied of gibing, but without which the present committee could not have been developed; and the third man is the noble Earl himself, who during the time he was Prime Minister left this great Constitutional want wholly unfilled.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: I expressly said, and took some pains to lay stress on it, that there was such a Committee when I was Prime Minister.

THE EARL OF SELBORNE: I understood the noble Earl to say that when the annual Estimates were brought forward he met the Secretary for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty and discussed them together.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: I never said a word about Estim tes. I said it was for the purpose of discussing these matters.

*THE EARL OF SELBORNE: This germ is now revealed to the public gaze for the first time. I am glad that the germ did exist; but it certainly would have died unfruitful if the present Government had not revived it in a more extended and far more practical way. The noble Earl must excuse me for having failed to appreciate the fact that this small Cabinet Committee existed, when there was nothing in his speech to show what he must have known, as was pointed out by Lord Goschen, that a great deal of work unknown to the country had been going on by means of the joint Naval and Military Committee and the Colonial Defence Committee. The work of these two Committees has been far too little recognised; for, while all the faults of administration have been recalled the good they effected has been ignored. Great as has been the criticism of the War Office for its conduct of the late war, it is an absolute fact that the mobilisation of the Army, the supply of drafts, the provision of stores and ammunition, was carried on as effectively and with as great rapidity as was possible; and the country would not be provided with the great works at Gibraltar and Devonport and other places if these questions had not been faced, not only by the present Government but by the late Government, without the public being aware of it. But that good work does not prove that we should not endeavour to perfect the machinery for national defence by the constitution of this Committee. What the public has not yet quite realised is the magnitude and complexity of the work that lies before this Committee. The problems arising from the peculiar constitution of this Empire are, perhaps, the most complicated that any nation has to deal with. This is very little understood, even by statesmen whom one would think had learnt it out of their own personal experience.

I have great respect or the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons; but I must say that his speeches, not only on the subject of the constitution of this Committee but also on the Naval Estimates, show a most extraordinary lack of appreciation of the difficulties of the problems involved. In connection with the Navy, the right hon. Gentleman spoke as if it were this country that had been pressing on other countries increased naval expenditure, whereas it is strictly accurate to say that, no matter what Government has been in power, we have only followed other countries whose shipbuilding has compelled us to keep pace with them. The right hon. Gentleman also spoke as if the problem of naval defence was one of equality of ships, and that we had by far exceeded that standard. Now there has never been any suggestion of equality with two naval Powers except in respect of battleships. The real question is as to the requisite expenditure necessary to protect the commerce of this country in time of war; and for that purpose no standard of bare equality of numbers has ever been suggested. Nor does Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman seem at all able to understand the kind of problem that this Committee will have to work out. If I have been surprised by what he has said about the Navy, I heard with sheer amazement what the noble Earl who introduced this Motion said about the North-West Frontier of India. I do not see why we should make excuses for dealing with this question. India is ours. The United Kingdom is ours. We talk about the defence of the United Kingdom, why not about the defence of India? In both cases we most earnestly pray that the occasion for defence will never arise. We believe that in neither case it ought to arise. But we are as much entitled to discuss the problem of the defence of India as the defence of the United Kingdom.

With my great respect for the noble Earl, I listened with perfect amazement when he contemplated the possibility of a war in the course of which India might be invaded by some Power and in which it would not be necessary for us to send any reinforcements to India. And still more was I amazed for the reasons he gave—that they could not arrive for thirty-six days, and at the end of thirty-six days they would be obviously too late. I cannot imagine how a statesman of his great abilities, who has occupied the positions of Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister, and had at his disposal all the advice of military, naval, and Indian experts, can possibly have brought his mind to that frame in which it would be possible for him to make such a statement as that. I do say, unhesitatingly, that if he is again in a position of authority, which is probable, and he gives his mind to this question as president of the Defence Committee, as I know he will, he will not hold for many hours the opinion he has expressed so lightly to-day. And what was his remedy? His remedy was to increase the Indian Army. That increase would be of the most expensive kind; whereas the reinforcements we had contemplated sending to India in time of need would, of course, be mainly composed of regiments made up to their strength from the Reserves, and would be far more economical than a corresponding increase to the Indian Army. What is the problem before us? There are questions which are purely naval. These are questions for the Admiralty. There are questions which are purely military. These are questions for the War Office. Then there is the class of questions both naval and military, with which neither Admiralty nor War Office is competent to deal alone. Then there is the even more important class of cases which are not naval alone, nor military alone, nor naval and military combined alone, but naval and military and political. It is that class of cases with which the Defence Committee have to deal—the cases which are naval, military, and political.

Now I will turn to the suggestion made by my noble friend Lord Goschen. He said the Foreign Secretary ought always to be a member of this Committee, and also the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I venture to differ; and I will give my reason for my opinion. To make any such Committee a success it is necessary to reduce to the lowest possible number those on whose constant, never-failing work such success depends. The fewer there are, the more responsibility those few will feel never to miss a meeting and never to attend a meeting without having read all the Papers supplied to them and as far as possible mastered the situation. When you take the Prime Minister, the President of the Council, the Secretary of State for War, and the First Lord of the Admiralty, the First Sea Lord, the Director of Naval Intelligence, the Commander-in-Chief, and the Director of Military Intelligence, you have there a nucleus of men who are prepared to regard that work as having as paramount a call on their time and energy as the work of the Cabinet has for a Cabinet Minister, and you include the only members who need always attend. Why should the Foreign Secretary, who is a most overworked Statesman, attend when there is no question of foreign policy involved in the discussion of the day? In many cases you may assume that such and such a political position governs the situation, and the question remains what are the naval and military steps to be taken, and you do not want to call in the Foreign Secretary or Chancellor of the Exchequer. But if it comes to considering what the political conditions are likely to be you must call in the Foreign Secretary; and if you say that a certain eventuality touches your naval and military position, and that further steps have to be taken and more expenditure, or expenditure of a different kind, must be incurred, then we pass to a stage at which no meeting can be held with utility without the presence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Returning to the question of naval strength, the Government has never abandoned what has been known as the two-Power standard. That has never been interpreted as a mere equality of battleships with the two next naval Powers. The two-Power standard surely means that, given a war with the next two naval Powers, there should be a reasonable probability of victory for this country. That is what is meant by the two Power standard, according to my interpretation of it. When you pass from the question of battleships to the question of commerce, which I alluded to just now, your Lordships must see how impossible it is for the country to accept the interpretation of our naval necessities that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman has laid down. When I remind your Lordships that the average value of our seaborne trade for the twenty years ended December 31st, 1899, was £710,000,000 sterling and the average value of the seaborne trade of the next two naval Powers was £340,000,000 sterling only; when I remind you that the aggregate tonnage of the mercantile marine in the year 1899 which the British Navy had to protect was 9,000,000, whereas the aggregate tonnage to be protected by the next two naval Powers was only 1,500,000, you will see what a totally different task our Navy has to perform, as compared with the Navy of any two Powers with which it may be confronted. Not only is the struggle for naval supremacy with us a struggle for life and death, as stated by Lord Rosebery, but with all other Powers their naval strength is comparatively only an incident in their national existence. But the actual work we have to accomplish in defending the trade of the mercantile marine throws upon us a corresponding obligation to keep up our naval power. In dealing with our trade, there never has, by any Government at any time, been any attempt to say that our cruiser standard should merely equal that of the next two naval Powers. I feel more compunction in passing from these criticisms to something else that the noble Earl said, because I am extremely sensible of the generosity of the tribute he paid to the Board of Admiralty. I did not take that as meant for myself or my colleagues. It was a tribute to the excellence of the permanent organisation.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY No, it was meant for you personally.

*THE EARL OF SELBORNE: And as a tribute to the excellence of the permanent organisation I believe it is justified; and my noble friends in this House who have held the office I now hold will bear me out. I do maintain that the organisation of the Admiralty is singularly adapted to the needs of the country. It is an organisation which works without friction, and that is saying a great deal. But the noble Earl has recurred to-night to a matter which has already been discussed on the platform—to the suggestion that Lord Kitchener might become the Secretary of State for War. Now, my Lords, I have not the least objection to the noble Earl discussing changes in our system, but why should he play with words by pretending that the suggestion is not incompatible with our Parliamentary system as we know it? If he chooses to come forward and say our Parliamentary system is worn out, and if he proposes various changes in it, none of us would cavil; but what we do object to is the noble Earl's pretending that what he is proposing is not a complete revolution in all that we understand by Parliamentary Government at the present moment. His proposal is that the whole Cabinet should be responsible for the acts of Lord Kitchener as Secretary of State for War, and that he should not be responsible for any of their acts. That proposal may be good or bad, but it is a complete change of our system; and if you come to that, my Lords, why have two soldiers—two men like Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener? If a soldier is to be Secretary of State for War, why do we want a Commander-in-Chief? If a distinguished soldier is all that is required, why are you not content with a Commander-in-Chief? Why not get rid of a Secretary of State for War? Even on the noble Earl's own plan, supposing it to be feasible, he would find it run much more smoothly if he had one soldier instead of two.

I am entirely saved the task of answering Lord Rosebery's question as to what the Government mean when they talk of the military necessities of the Empire. Lord Goschen has summarised our requirements so fully and so succinctly that I really need add nothing to what he said. He has disposed of the colonial bogey; he has dealt with the Indian problem; and he has dealt with the supplementing of naval actions by military expeditions which has been the history of all our naval campaigns. He did not allude to, though I am quite sure he did not forget, the maintenance of those garrisons at the coaling stations which we have to keep up to support the Navy; and he then passed on to the question of home defence. I am not going into the question of the relative position of the Navy and the Army in regard to home defence. My views, I trust, are thoroughly well-known. They are the same as those of the noble Earl and Lord Goschen. The Navy is the only real permanent defence of the whole British Empire. But you cannot be too logical. If you try to drive that principle home too far, to what conclusion does it really lead? To this—that all the Regular troops you want are those that are necessary for action outside the United Kingdom, and that you do not want any auxiliary troops at all.

The Earl of Selborne.

That is not my position. That is why I say it is impossible to drive this matter to the rockbed of logic. If you pursue it to its ultimate logical conclusion it leads to a *reductio ad absurdum*, that you do not want any Volunteers at all. Therefore, I say that you must deal with this matter in a comprehensive spirit; and the mistake, I think, that has been made—I speak entirely as a private individual—not only by this Government, but by every party which has ever been in power yet, is that in dealing with the Auxiliary forces, they have never tried to organise them properly. Surely it is far better to have 50,000 Militia or 50,000 Volunteers really organised, with all their component parts and the proper arms in proportion to each other, than to have double or treble that number who have grown up by accident without any regard to military necessity. But if you agree to that, who has taken more steps than anyone else to bring order out of chaos than my right hon. friend the Secretary of State for War? You may deride the Army Corps system, but I believe that it will maintain its own against all the criticism levelled against it, because it is adaptable to any numbers you choose finally to have. It is the first attempt that has really been made to properly proportion the various arms and fashion these chaotic parts into an organised whole. The noble Earl was very careful, in bringing forward this Motion, not to commit himself to numbers. I think he was very wise; because how can you possibly defend, on grounds of efficiency, a proposal such as has been deliberately made in another place, that, after blowing hot for three years, suddenly you should blow icy coid, and, without any relation to any organised policy, reduce the Army by 27,000 men? That was the proposal actually made, but rejected. Such a proposal cannot possibly tend to efficiency; and I do implore noble Lords opposite, if they ever come to deal with this question, not to sit down and suddenly write off so many men as will give them that diminution of taxation which at that moment happens to be convenient to them, but to try to think out the question as we are trying to think it out, from its commencement, and whatever force they have to endeavour to have it presented to the country as an organised whole. The noble Earl presented the Government with a dilemma. He said—

> "Mr. Brodrick has talked somewhere of having 600,000 men. All I have to say is that if he has 600,000 men I do not know what he wants them for; and if he has not got 600,000 men, then we are paying too much money."

But only a few sentences afterwards the noble Earl developed his argument to the effect that what we really wanted in this country was a large, thoroughly well-organised Army of Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers. Did it not strike the noble Earl that by far the greater proportion of these 600,000 men are Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers, and that the very men on whom he wants to depend for the ultimate defence of this country are the men against whose existence he is inveighing when he inveighs against this force of 600,000 men?

Nothing could be more inaccurate than to say that my right hon. friend the Secretary for War introduced his scheme without proper consideration and in an immature condition. Remember that when he became Secretary for War my right hon. friend had served in the War Office an apprenticeship of many years. He had been there both as Financial Secretary and as Under Secretary, and he had become, perhaps, more familiar with the questions which affect the British Army than any Minister on either side of politics at that time. Therefore, in no sense could he be said to have approached these subjects without having informed himself upon them. It is true that the war was not then over; but it is also true that the Commander-in-Chief had returned from the war, and that the scheme which was adopted, and adopted very deliberately, by the House of Commons two years ago, was framed by the Secretary for War and the Commander-in-Chief as that, in their opinion, most adapted to the needs of the country. As I have contended before in this House, the real question at issue between us is how many men are required for the military purposes of the Empire. The Army Corps system holds the field because it is adaptable to any numbers you choose to have. It is adaptable to the Regulars, the Militia, and the Volunteers. And I do not think, notwithstanding all that the noble Lord has said, that he has proved his point against the Secretary for War. I am quite sure that he does not really hold the view that the Secretary for War absolutely ignores the Navy in all his calculations on this question. I know the noble Earl quoted some words which, taken from their context and used adroitly, might bear that interpretation; but I am sure the noble Earl will take it from me, as a colleague of my right hon. friend, that nothing could really less represent his true position in this matter. He recognises quite as much as the noble Earl, or as I do myself, that the Navy is the force on which the whole British Empire rests, and that its military strength is purely supplemental. Nor, again, is it fair, I think, to say that my right hon. friend has ignored quality and preferred quantity in dealing with the Army. I do not think any Secretary for War before him has ever taken steps so thorough or so well devised as he has taken to improve the quality of the Army. He has raised the pay; he has improved the conditions under which the soldier lives; and, quite recently, he has taken a further step to direct all the recruiting authorities to take the utmost care as to the class of recruits they select. Therefore, I do not think on any of these counts has the noble Earl's indictment, friendly and kindly as it was to my right hon. friend personally, been made good. At any rate, on all these questions he has made more progress than his predecessors have ever been able to do; and because the whole result of the work in which he has been engaged cannot be shown within two years it is surely not compatible with the doctrine of efficiency to say that that whole work should be plucked up by the roots and some new system invented to replace it.

But the real stress of the noble Earl's speech rested on the financial condition of the country. The noble Earl will pardon me if I say that I do wish, when he comes down to this House and talks to us on these big questions, he would not always paint with so lurid a brush. During the South African war he did not talk to us of economy. It was not the moment. He talked to us about the inadequacy of our military preparations and how absolutely necessary it was for us to put our house in order and see that our Navy and Army were strong enough. All the pressure the noble Earl put on the Government at that time was directed to increasing our military strength.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: Hear, hear.

*THE EARL OF SELBORNE: But even in doing that he painted the picture with what I call a lurid brush. Now, when, according to his idea, the important point is not so much the strength of our military resources as the organisation of our finances, he again comes down and paints with this lurid brush. He talked of enormous expenditure, oppressive taxation, and bleeding to death in time of peace.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: That was a quotation.

*THE EARL OF SELBORNE: I entirely agree with him, as I do with the noble Duke who spoke last, that the material strength of this country rests not only on its Navy, but on sound finance. The Navy is of no use at all unless the country is financially sound—though the country cannot be made financially sound unless there is a Navy to give it protection. Therefore I admit to the fullest possible extent that sound finance and good credit are absolutely essential to the maintenance of our Empire. Everything is by comparison. "Enormous expenditure," "oppressive taxation," "bleeding to death"—how can those terms be applied to us when we remember what our forefathers endured 100 years ago? The noble Earl talks about a National Debt of £800,000,000. In 1815 it was £900,000,000. If our forefathers could bear that debt, cannot we bear it now? What is the reason that we feel this taxation more severely nowadays? It is not that we are poorer, or that our working classes are worse off; but that we have, for our own purposes, reduced the basis of taxation to the lowest minimum. We have entirely abandoned all those general sources of taxation which enabled our forefathers to tide over their financial difficulties. We must be consistent. Free Trade is the fiscal policy which best suits this country. But when we cut ourselves off deliberately from all these sources of taxation which our forefathers enjoyed, we must not be surprised if, in a moment of real national difficulty, the taxes which remain are high. That is not a reason why we should not reduce those taxes if we can; but I do not wish the country to expect too much in this direction from the work of the Defence Committee. When we are only at the beginning of so great a task, it would be unwise to prophesy as to what the result will be. But the examination of this question as a whole will receive close attention from the Defence Committee, and will do more for the proper co-ordination of our system of Imperial defence than anything which has yet been done. I hope that as a result, though I do not prophesy, the rate of increase in our naval and military Budgets will be checked.

But I wish most earnestly to say one word more, and I speak now as an individual and not in any sense as representing the Government. I do hope, if the time of the cold fit comes in this country, when the nation is no longer prepared to spend so much on the Army or the Navy, that whatever Government is in power will not attempt to cut down the Estimates suddenly and without any real policy behind the action. To cut down 25,000 men from the Army one day, or £5,000,000 from the Navy Votes, can produce nothing but chaos, and must be absolutely incompatible with anything like effective administration. The whole, when it has been carefully thought out, is a complex whole, of which each part is dependent on the other. The ships are no use without the men, nor the men without the ships; and neither are of use without adequate stores and reserves; they are then a living sham, because they cannot fulfil the functions which the country expects of them. If the country does decide that a limit to expenditure has been reached, the proper course is for the country to give fair notice to the Admiralty and to the War Office, and to say that, say the next five years the expenditure each year must not exceed a certain sum. Then the Departments would be able to frame their Estimates accordingly and to the best advantage. Nothing has so much alarmed me in the recent debates in another place as the idea which seems prevalent that you can suddenly arrest expenditure or diminish establishments without producing far-reaching results. I hope that under this or any future Government the Committee of Defence will take measures to teach public opinion that all these questions can only be dealt with properly on an organised plan. The deliberations of the Committee will not be made public; but the conclusions which they arrive at, and the reasoned arguments in support of them, will be at the disposal of each Government in turn; and in future it can never be said that, in taking hasty action, the Government were not aware of the reasoned policy of their predecessors or of the arguments on which that policy was based.

Moved, that the debate stand adjourned till Friday next.—(*The Marquess of Ripon.*)

On Question, Adjournment agreed to.

MEMBERS OF FRIENDLY SOCIETIES AND THE POOR LAW.

LORD LAMINGTON: My Lords, in view of a Bill that may probably come before your Lordships, I beg to ask His Majesty's Government whether the Local Government Board will lay on the Table a Return from the Boards of Guardians in England and Wales, or from any large numbers of such Boards as are fairly representative of unions which differ in administrative and social conditions, showing in how many instances during any half-year or quarter of a year, in cases of members of friendly societies, otherwise in their opinion entitled to relief out of the poor rates, the Boards of Guardians have acted upon the discretion allowed them under 57 & 58 Vict., c. 25 (1894), and have taken into consideration the amount which may be received by such members from the friendly societies to which they belong, and in how many instances they have not taken this into consideration.

LORD KENYON: I regret to have to inform the noble Lord that the Local Government Board have no information which would enable them to give the Return for which he asks.

LORD LAMINGTON: Would it not be possible to get the information?

LORD KENYON: I am afraid not, as Boards of Guardians do not keep the necessary *data*.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Standing Order No. XXXIX. to be considered on Thursday next in order to its being suspended for that day's sitting.

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Eight o'clock, to Thursday next, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 24th March, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS.

The Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of Ways and Means.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).

MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order No. 62 has been complied with, viz.:—

Baker Street and Waterloo Railway (Transfer) Bill.

Ulster and Connaught Light Railways Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

PRIVATE BILLS (PETITION FOR ADDITIONAL PROVISION) (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for additional Provision in the following Bill, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz. :—

Maidstone Gas Bill.

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

Cheshire Lines Committee Bill. Read a second time, and committed.

Billingshurst and Districts Gas Bill [By Order]. Order for Second Reading read, and discharged. Bill withdrawn.

Metropolitan District Railway (Various Powers) Bill [By Order]. Read a second time, and committed.

Kent Water Board Bill. Order [16th March] for Second Reading upon Thursday read, and discharged. Bill withdrawn.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 2) Bill; read a second time, and committed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 1).

Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Aberavon, Darlington, Hexham, Reading, Stafford, and Wallasey, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Lawson and Mr. Walter Long.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 2).

Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Barnes, Burton-upon-Trent, Castle Ward (Rural), Matlock-Bath-and-Scarltim-Nick, Newton Abbott, Penrith, Stroud, Worthing, and Yardley (Rural), ordered to be brought in by Mr. Grant Lawson and Mr. Walter Long.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 3).

Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to the counties of Oxford and Worcester, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Grant Lawson and Mr. Walter Long.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER (HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES).

Bill to confirm a Provisional Order of the Local Government Board relating to Bolton, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Grant Lawson and Mr. Walter Long.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 1) BILL.

"To confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Aberavon, Darlington, Hexham, Reading, Stafford, and Wallasey," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 115.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 2) BILL.

"To confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Barnes, Burton-on-Trent, Castle Ward (Rural), Matlock-Bath-and-Scarltim-Nick, Newton Abbott, Penrith, Stroud, Worthing, and Yardley (Rural)," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 116.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 3) BILL.

"To confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to the counties of Oxford and Worcester," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 117.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER (HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES) BILL.

"To confirm a Provisional Order of the Local Government Board relating to Bolton," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 118.]

East Ardsley Gas Bill; Bridgwater Gas Bill; Winchester Water and Gas Bill.

Reported with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PETITIONS.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Association of Municipal Corporations; and Nottinghamshire; to lie upon the Table.

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Denny; Lanark; Kirkoswald; Riccarton; and St. Ninians; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Linlithgow, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

Petitions against: from Merthyr Tydvil; Staines; Depwade; Handsworth; Stoke Newington; Walthamstow; Croydon; and Chipping Norton; to lie upon the Table.

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

Petition from Clitheroe, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.

Petitions against establishment: from Dunfermline; Falkirk; Oban; and Cowdenbeath; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (NAVY VOTES).

Return [presented 23rd March] to be printed. [No. 87.]

EXPLOSIONS (NOBEL'S EXPLOSIVES FACTORY AT ARDEER, AYRSHIRE).

Copy presented, of Report by Captain M. B. Lloyd, His Majesty's Inspector of Explosives, to the right hon. the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on the circumstances attending an explosion of nitro-glycerine, which occurred in one of the final washing-houses of the factory of Nobel's Explosives Company, Limited, at Ardeer, near Stevenston, Ayrshire, on the 7th October, 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1887.

Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 16th March, 1903, granting a retired allowance to Arthur Algernon Parkin, 3rd Class Clerk, Money Order Office, Post Office, under the Act [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

NATIONAL DEBT ANNUITIES.

Account presented, of the gross amount of all bank annuities and any annuities for terms of years transferred, and of all sums of money paid to the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt, and the gross amount of annuities for lives and for terms of years, etc., granted within the year ended 5th January, 1903 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 88.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Treatment of Prisoners Convicted under the Vaccination Acts.

MR. LEVY (Leicestershire, Loughborough): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the police sergeant responsible for the handcuffing of two men at Hinckley on 27th February, when arrested for non-payment of fines and costs incurred under the Vaccination Acts, is the same sergeant who, on 6th January, struck a man on the head with a stick, thereby cutting his head open and rendering him unconscious, because he refused to allow the sergeant to examine the bag he was carrying; whether complaints have been made to the Home Office or to the Chief Constable of Leicestershire respecting the conduct of this officer; and what steps will be taken to prevent a recurrence of such conduct on his part.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas.*) I have made inquiries and am informed that the sergeant to whom the latter part of the Question refers did use handcuffs in making an arrest early in the morning of 27th February, but had nothing to do with handcuffing the two men indicated in the Question. No complaint has been made to the Home Office as to the affair mentioned in the latter part of the Question, but the chief constable of Leicestershire informs me that on the 30th December the sergeant in question did inflict considerable injury on a man whom he mistook for a burglar. His conduct on that occasion was inquired into at the time and was dealt with by the Chief Constable. The injured man was compensated.

Naturalisation of Aliens.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if inquiry is made in the country of origin with regard to the antecedents therein of an alien applicant for letters of naturalisation as a British subject; or what steps are taken to ascertain if the alien's presence in the United Kingdom is not due to a sentence of deportation from his native country for some criminal act; and, further, what is the period of residence in the United Kingdom required before naturalisation, and what fee or evidence of means is necessary.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas.*) In every case of application for a certificate of naturalisation careful inquiry is made by the police as to the character of the applicant and the respectability of the referees whom he is required to produce in support of his application, but inquiry is not made with regard to the applicant's character in the country of origin, unless there is some reason to suspect misconduct before the alien's arrival in this country. Before a certificate is granted, the applicant must show that he has resided in the United Kingdom for five years out of the last eight years. A fee of £5 is required to be paid for a certificate.

India—Loans to Native Princes.

SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee): To ask the Secretary of State for India, with regard to the remission of interest for three years on loans advanced by the Government of India to Princes of the Native States, enabling them to extend relief to their famine stricken subjects, as arranged by the Governor-General at the Delhi Durbar, will H.H. the Nizam share in that concession in respect of the 141 lakhs of the Berar Loans mentioned in paragraph 5 of the Government of India's Despatch of 28th April, 1902, and in other passages of Parliamentary Papers issued in December last.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) The arrangements announced at the Durbar did not provide for any alteration in the financial relations recently established between the Government of India and the Nizam in respect of Berar.

Dunmore Petty Sessions Court.

MR. DUFFY (Galway, S.): To ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether he is aware that at the Petty Sessions Court at Dunmore, County Galway, on the 12th inst., two men were charged with assault; that the bench was composed of four magistrates who were equally divided, two for inflicting a fine and two for returning case for trial; and that the case was sent for trial; and will he say if any precedent exists for such action.

(*Answered by Mr. Atkinson.*) In this case the injured man received five severe cuts on his head and had his skull fractured. Two magistrates wished to treat this as a trivial assault, and deal with it summarily, inflicting a fine. This was wholly illegal and improper. They had no jurisdiction whatever to deal with it summarily. All the justices held the offence was proved; and as it was indictable the only legal and proper course was to return the accused for trial. Two of the justices, in conformity with two recent precedents, adopted this course.

Ireland—Police Pensioners as Postmasters.

MR. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he will state the number of police pensioners and police pensioners' wives at present in charge of post offices in Ireland.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) The information asked for by the hon. Member is not at present in my possession; and to obtain it would involve a considerable amount of trouble, which would not, I think, be justified by the results obtained.

H.M.S. "Warrior"—Cost of Alterations.

MR. HARMSWORTH (Caithness-shire): To ask the Secretary to the

Admiralty if he can state to what purpose it is intended to devote the "Warrior," and what has been the cost of the alterations to this ship; and whether he will explain why, with a view to reducing the cost, an examination of the boilers and engines was not made before the vessel was roofed in.

(*Answered by Mr. Arnold-Forster.*) The "Warrior" is being prepared for service as a repair and depôt ship for torpedo boat destroyers. The cost of the alterations up to date has been about £6,000, but further work still remains to be done. It was at first intended only to utilise the vessel as a lay apart store for destroyers, and for this purpose the removal of the lighter portions only of the machinery was necessary. It was subsequently decided to convert the ship into a repair and depôt ship; and this decision involved the removal of the whole of the machinery. The latter part of the hon. Member's Question is therefore based on a misapprehension.

Collier "Hampstead"—Cost of Alterations—Speed.

MR. HARMSWORTH: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he can state what has been the cost so far of the alterations made in the collier "Hampstead," now called the "Aquarius," which it is proposed to employ as a fleet auxiliary, and will he state what her speed is to be.

(*Answered by Mr. Arnold-Forster.*) The expenditure up to date on the "Aquarius" has been £17,000. The speed of the vessel when loaded will be about 10 knots.

Secondary Education in Ireland—Deputation to Chief Secretary.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a memorial from the various educational associations in Ireland connected with secondary education asking him to receive a deputation from these associations with reference to the proportional grant due to Irish education; and, if so, whether he can say if he will receive the deputation; and, if so, where and when.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The memorial has been received. I regret, however, that it is not practicable for me to receive the proposed deputation. As already stated, I hope shortly to make an announcement on the subject.

Emigrants to Canada — Government Assistance to Discharged Soldiers.

MR. MARSHALL HALL (Lancashire, Southport): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will consider the advisability of giving to Army Reservists and discharged soldiers who have fought in the late South African War some pecuniary assistance to enable such of them as may so desire to emigrate to Canada, or some other colony willing to receive them.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) I fear that this object, however desirable in itself, is not one to which Army Funds could properly be devoted.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Commissions in King's African Rifles.

MR. FREDERICK WILSON (Norfolk, Mid.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will explain why officers of the Imperial Yeomanry who served throughout the war in South Africa, but who do not belong to the Home Yeomanry, are excluded from the chance of obtaining commissions in the King's African Rifles, seeing that such commissions are open to the competition of Yeomanry officers who have never seen service in the field.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Lord STANLEY, Lancashire, Westhoughton): The hon. Member has been misinformed. Service during the war in South Africa is held to be an essential qualification for commissions in the King's African Rifles. Officers to hold commissions in these Rifles must already hold a commission in some other branch of the service.

Army Recruiting—Character Regulations.

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will undertake that his recent decision to inquire into the character of all applicants for enlistment in the Army, and to require in all cases some evidence of respectability, shall not only be announced in Army Orders and in instructions to recruiting officers, but shall also be promulgated as widely as possible, and particularly by official posters displayed, with the consent of the Postmaster-General, in every post office in the United Kingdom.

LORD STANLEY: It is not customary to announce such changes in Army Orders, but instructions were yesterday issued to all recruiting officers, who will take any steps they think necessary to secure further publicity.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: Are the officers responsible for the issue of official posters?

LORD STANLEY: I cannot say at the moment, but they have been told that they are to take every means in their power to make this regulation publicly known.

New Service Rifle.

MR. FREDERICK WILSON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will consider the advisability of changing the fixed bar of the back sight of the new service rifle into a sliding bar so as to allow for windage in shooting.

LORD STANLEY: The question of a sliding bar on the sight was fully considered, but it was decided that such a sight was unsuitable for service conditions.

Officers' Outfits.

MR. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether he will state to what firms in London a circular was recently issued by the War Office stating that the Commander-in-Chief proposed to furnish officers, on appointment to the Army, with lists of firms prepared to give special cash prices for the outfits required by them; and whether this circular was sent to tailors in Ireland, Scotland, and the provinces.

LORD STANLEY: I am not prepared to read out a long list of firms in reply to a Question, but I may inform the hon Member that the circular recently despatched was sent to those firms who took the trouble to respond to the original circular, and amongst those were tailors in Ireland, Scotland and the provinces.

Bloemfontein Inter-Colonial Conference.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, N.R., Cleveland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will state what decisions have been so far arrived at by the Inter-Colonial Conference at Bloemfontein.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): I am not yet in a position to make any statement on the subject.

Italian Ice Cream Shops in Scotland.

SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether complaints have reached him that in some places in Scotland Italian ice cream shops are allowed to keep open to very late hours and retail alcoholic liquors after the public houses and licensed grocers' shops are closed; and, if so, whether the police will be instructed to deal with such cases.

MR. ANSTRUTHER (St. Andrew's Burghs, for Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): Complaints have often been made as to the keeping open of ice cream shops, but the retailing of liquors therein is an offence under the existing law and the police have ample power of dealing with it.

Technical Instruction for Small Allotment Holders.

MR. SHEEHAN (Cork Co., Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will consider the advisability of recommending to the Department of Agriculture that it should appoint instructors to disseminate information amongst, and give object lessons to, the tenants of small allotments, such as the occupants of labourers' cottages and small farmers, showing how plots of a small acreage may be best cultivated, what methods of horticulture could be most usefully employed, and also with the object of introducing and fostering profitable home industries amongst the poor.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): The appointment of instructors for these purposes is a matter for the County Committees of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. Fifteen counties have already appointed such instructors, and fourteen other counties have made provision for their employment.

Balbriggan Harbour.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin County, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention had been drawn to the state of Balbriggan Harbour, which, owing to the accumulation of sand, has become almost useless except at high tide; and whether he can hold out any hope that the dredger which has for some time been in use at various places on the East Coast of Ireland will be available for use at Balbriggan during the next six months.

MR. WYNDHAM: The harbour is controlled and maintained by the Dublin Port and Docks Board. The dredger referred to in the Question is the property of the Commissioners of Public Works, and it would not be practicable for them, in the circumstances, to incur the expenditure proposed.

Irish National Schools.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can say when the new plans for national schools in Ireland will be ready, in view of the fact that inconvenience has been caused by the delay in furnishing them.

MR. WYNDHAM: The matter is still the subject of correspondence between the Irish Government and the Treasury.

Land Purchase in Limerick.

MR. LUNDON (Limerick, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, to what extent have proceedings in the Land Court been advanced as regards the sale to the tenants of the property of the late Michael Marshall Lloyd Apjohn, on the townlands of Garrison, Nicker, Garranmore, Garranebeg, Drominboy, and Ballyvoneen; and will he explain the delay in carrying out the sales.

MR. WYNDHAM: I am now informed that the rental has not yet been settled, but that it is expected to be completed within a month. When that has been done a request may be issued for an inspection under Section 40 of the Act of 1896, or, if the land judge so directs, negotiations will be opened for a sale to the tenants by agreement between the parties.

MR. LUNDON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state under what provision the sale was attempted in the Land Court of the Marshall Estate, in the parishes of Doon and Oola, County Limerick; and will he explain why the sale was not carried through.

MR. WYNDHAM: The provisions of the 40th Section of the Act of 1896 were held not to be applicable to this estate. It is still open to the tenants to purchase their holdings, by agreement, under the Land Purchase Acts.

St. Patrick's Day—Closing of Public Houses in Dublin.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can give an estimate of the number of public houses in Dublin voluntarily closed on the National holiday, St. Patrick's Day; and whether he can give the number of cases tried in Dublin police courts on Monday, 16th, and Wednesday, 18th March, and what comparison those figures bear to last year.

MR. WYNDHAM: 425 out of a total of 918 licensed houses in the Dublin Metropolitan Police District were voluntarily closed on St. Patrick's Day. The number of cases tried on the day following was thirty-two, compared with sixty-nine on the corresponding date of last year. There were eighty-nine cases tried on the 16th March, which, in 1902, fell on a Sunday.

Brownhall Estate, County Mayo.

MR. JOHN O'DONNELL (Mayo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state how long the estate known as Brownhall Estate, near the town of Balla, in the barony of Clanmorris, County Mayo, has been in the Land Judge's Court; and whether, seeing that the tenants on this estate signed agreements to purchase their holdings in 1899, he will explain why the solicitor for the receiver is still pressing the tenants for their old rents immediately the running half gale becomes due; why this solicitor has demanded costs of said processes, although the rents were sent on before they were served; and why the sale of the estate has not been completed.

MR. JOHN O'DONNELL: I beg also to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that in 1900 the solicitor to the mortgagees of the estate known as the Brownhall Estate, in the barony of Clanmorris, County Mayo, in reply to a communication from one of the tenants on that estate, informed him that everything was ready for completing the sale and bringing it before the Court of Chancery the following week, and that a similar reply has been given to tenants in 1901 and 1902; and whether he will take steps to expedite the final settlement of the case of these tenants.

MR. WYNDHAM: The information before me does not enable me to reply to all the inquires in these two Questions. I am informed, however, that considerable delay was occasioned in carrying out the sale by objections filed by the tenants. They have now been disposed of, and it is hoped that within a fortnight the tenants' applications for advances, as well as the rental, will be lodged in the Land Commission.

Steamship Subsidies Committee.

MR. EVELYN CECIL (Aston Manor): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether his attention has been called to the Report of the Steamship Subsidies Committee; and whether he will consider the advisability of appointing, in accordance with their suggestion, a permanent Committee, consisting of a representative of the Admiralty, the Board of Trade, Colonial Office, and Post Office, with the addition of trade representatives, to watch the development of foreign competition, and consult from time to time what steps are required to meet it.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I am aware of the recommendation of the Select Committee, which formed a part of the excellent Report for which my hon. friend was chiefly responsible. The question of the formation of a permanent Committee is under consideration. Whether in addition to the departmental members of it there ought to be representatives of the shipping interest seems to us very doubtful, as it is possible they might themselves be recipients of any subsidy which the Committee might recommend. As at present advised I am not averse to the idea of introducing an outside element.

Sale of Adulterated Butter Bill.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he can fix an early day for the Second Reading of the Sale of Adulterated Butter Bill.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY (Sir A. ACLAND-HOOD, Somersetshire, Wellington) said it was hoped that the Second Reading of the Sale of Adulterated Butter Bill would be taken next week, either on Tuesday or Wednesday.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL As there is considerable difference of of opinion on this Bill, and we are anxious to have further information, may I ask if the Second Reading cannot be postponed till after Easter?

MR. GALLOWAY (Manchester, S.W.): If it is proposed to refer this Bill to the Grand Committee on Trade, would it not be better to read it a second time before Easter?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I understand it is the general wish that the Bill shall be proceeded with without unnecessary delay.

Venezuela.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether His Majesty's Government have been called upon to make amends to the Government of the United States for the publication, on page 214 of the Blue-book, Venezuela, No. 1, 1903, of reflections of a personal character made by His Majesty's Minister at Caracas on members of the United States legation at that capital; and whether notice has been taken by the Secretary of State of the conduct of the officer in his Department charged with the preparation of this Blue-book so as to prevent any recurrence of an incident of this nature.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The United States Secretary of State brought to our notice the passage to which the Question refers, and was informed by His Majesty's Ambassador at Washington that it had escaped attention, otherwise it would not have been published. I need say no more than that an error of this kind, however regrettable, may occasionally occur in a Department, especially when that Department is undergoing the strain of heavy work.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Has proper notice of it been taken in the Department?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Of course proper notice has been taken of it in the Department.

The Easter Holidays.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I wish to ask whether the Leader of the House is in a position to state, more especially for the information of north country Members, when the holidays are likely to begin.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I should not like to pledge myself absolutely on the subject, but I hardly think it is possible they should begin before the Wednesday preceding Good Friday. I cannot pledge myself that they will begin even on that day.

DR. FARQUHARSON: How long will the holidays last?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am afraid I cannot answer that Question.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Mr. HALSEY reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged the following Member from the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures, Mr. Attorney-General; and had appointed in substitution, Mr. Solicitor-General.

Report to lie upon the Table.

STANDING ORDERS.

Resolutions reported from the Committee:

1. "That, in the case of the Beckenham Urban District Council Bill, Petition for additional Provision, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with. That the parties be permitted to introduce their additional Provision if the Committee on the Bill think fit."
2. "That, in the case of the Leigh Corporation Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 129 in the case of the Petition of the 'Reverend Bernard Vaughan and others' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."
3. "That, in the case of the North Eastern Railway Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 129 in the case of the Castleford Urban District Council against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."
4. "That, in the case of the Wigan Corporation Tramways Bill, Petition for additional Provision, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with. That the parties be permitted to introduce their additional Provision if the Committee on the Bill think fit."

Resolutions agreed to.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to,

Bank Holidays (Ireland) Bill, without Amendment;

Light Locomotives (Ireland) Bill, with Amendments.

NEW BILL.

SHEEP SCAB BILL.

"To amend The Diseases of Animals Act, 1894, in relation to Sheep Scab," presented by Mr. Hanbury; to be read a second time to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 119.]

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Order for Second Reading, read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

*Sir **CHARLES DILKE** (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) said the Amendment on the Paper was not intended to prevent the Government obtaining the forty millions of money dealt with by the Bill; the object of placing it there was to concentrate the discussion on the question of native labour and native taxation in South Africa. The question was a very wide one, and there might be some advantage to the House to have a debate at the present moment, in which they could put to the Government matters as to which it was very desirable hon. Members should be placed in possession of information as speedily as possible. It was useless to attempt to argue the extent of their responsibility in that matter, for that was admitted on all sides. The Government would admit that, whatever had been their responsibility towards the natives before the war broke out, it was still stronger now. The leading members of the Government, when they spoke of the circumstances which preceded the war, and referred to what they hoped might be the consequences to the natives if the war were successful, put the responsibility very high. It was said that the Boers had not treated the natives as a civilised nation should treat them; we had a higher ideal, and though we might have fallen short of that ideal we had never drawn a colour bar against natives by legislation. He was certainly not one of those who had any admiration for the views of Mr. Rhodes with regard to the native question, but it was only due to him to say that no one ever put the objection to the colour bar more strongly than he did in his policy. On Thursday the Colonial Secretary spoke of the natives as children, and on Monday the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in receiving a deputation on this question, used the same phrase; but the analogy was inapplicable, since the Government were under no undertaking to fit and train the natives for the position of citizens. They were to be permanently kept in a dependent and wholly subordinate situation.

A Question was put to the Colonial Secretary that afternoon as to what had been done by the Conference which had been recently sitting to consider that subject, and he gathered from such knowledge as he had of its proceedings that the Conference dealt with native taxation throughout all colonies and protectorates and the introduction of labour from outside. He did not wish, in dealing with that matter, to show any greater distrust of those who were employed in this work of importing native labour than must necessarily be felt in regard to any uncontrolled employing class, but every one knew that the employing class could not be trusted wholly, without supervision, to make their own arrangements for labour in a country where that labour had no voice in the affairs of the State. In the Rand address to the Secretary of State words were used which somewhat grated on their ears, viz.,

> "The native of South Africa is an excellent and powerful muscular machine."

The Conference had dealt with the taxation of natives, and he asked that any proposal for the equalisation of direct taxation should not be agreed to without the consent of the House. Such equalisation might constitute an enormous increase of native taxation. As to the comparison the Colonial Secretary made a few days ago in regard to the amount of the native taxation before the war broke out—a comparison which suggested that it was greater than the £2 a year represented by the new consolidated tax, he would like to point out that no native paid all the taxes the right hon. Gentleman mentioned, and before the war large proportions of the native population paid no taxes at all. In many parts of the country taxation was not enforced. Under our system, of course, it would be enforced everywhere. But that only touched one side of the problem. The new consolidated tax only affected direct taxation. The native, however, paid enormous indirect taxation, as was exemplified by the 20 per cent. *ad valorem* duty on imported blankets. What he feared was that equalisation of taxation would mean that Cape Colony would be asked to screw up taxation to the new Transvaal level. They ought to ask the Government, before it allowed the taxation to be raised in the colonies under their control to one uniform high level, to lay some information before the House with regard to the recommendations of the Inter-Colonial Conference.

As to the recruiting for native labour, no doubt the ordinance quoted by Lord Lansdowne was useful; but there was reason to think it had not always been acted upon. The Conference, it appeared, had recommended the importation under contract of labour from all British colonies in Africa. As regarded East Africa and Uganda, the objections to the transfer of labour to South Africa were known. They were well aware of the great depopulation which had taken place there; but as regarded the natives of British Central Africa, the slave raiding to which they had been subjected had created a terror at the thought of leaving their own country. Almost all the slaves in Zanzibar had, in fact, been taken from British Central Africa. At the deputation on the previous day Lord Lansdowne gave very satisfactory assurances with regard to the 1,000 natives to be levied in Central Africa, and probably there were other conditions besides those named by Lord Lansdowne. He would not trouble the House with all the conditions, but would deal only with one, which was that each native was to have thoroughly explained to him his work, his wages, and the terms of his employment. But under the Labour Agency ordinance of February, 1902, he understood that that was the law already, and it was a notorious fact that that stipulation had not been acted upon in the past, especially in the case of the labour brought in from the Portuguese dominions by labour touts. He thought that this was made clear by the enormous number of desertions which took place. In the case of the Portuguese native the conditions, he ventured to say, had not been enforced. He was practically kidnapped by his chief, who received a certain sum per head, and he certainly could not be considered to be a free contracting agent. The great majority of the natives were obtained from Portuguese territory, which was the principal source of supply. Indeed, of the 50,000 natives imported last year by one agency, nearly 39,000 came from Portuguese East Africa alone, and were brought in by outside touts. These natives clearly did not know the conditions of the labour, but they were subjected to punishment for breaches of their contract, and thus virtual slavery was enforced. Surely, under these circumstances, it was essential that if they gave attention to the natives in their own territory, the House should also give its attention to natives brought into that territory from the outside. He would quote to the House only one statement made some years ago in the House of Lords by a former High Commissioner. Lord Loch said—

> "He had had to check the system of applying to a chief for the supply of labour because, upon the chief hesitating to do this, action was taken to compel the chief to supply the labour required. This," he went on, "was as much forced labour as if men were compelled at the bayonet point to work."

The Colonial Secretary in 1901 said—

> "If a native contracts to serve in the mines and then deserts for any reason, say for higher wages in another mine or for any other purpose, he must pay damages and be punished."

But such a principle could only be enforced where a man knew what he was contracting to do, and that condition did not exist in the case of the natives obtained from Portuguese territory. The right hon. Gentleman had suggested that he disliked the idea of the Government itself acting as a recruiting agent, but it was not at all certain that that would not be better than that the recruiting should be done by persons without any responsibility. He should like to know how far the arrangement went between Johannesburg and Rhodesia with regard to labour. He feared that the agreement entered into for the importation of labour from Barotzeland was as unsatisfactory as that under which natives were obtained from Portuguese territory.

In offering these remarks he did not wish to make any attack on individuals in South Africa, which could only prejudice their case. He had nothing to say against the language used by the Secretary of State, who had shown much sympathy with their ideas in the past; there was only one statement in his speech on

Thursday last as to which he did not feel satisfied. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the folly of the mine owners in having suddenly lowered the wages and so killed the supply; he spoke of the wisdom of retracing that step, and he went on to describe the low-grade ore, and said that it could not be worked except at wages at a very low rate indeed. Of course every mining Member of the House was aware of the fact that owing to the progress of mining science ores could now be worked at a profit which formerly could not be so worked. No doubt there was a great reserve in the Transvaal of deposits which would be worked some day through the progress of mining science, but was it necessary to try to develop suddenly and at once all those low-grade mines, and submit to any conditions of labour and any reduction of wages which might be necessary to bring these mines into operation. He had always heard that the principal difficulty in the way of working these low-grade mines came, not from the price of labour, but from mines of another grade. He submitted to the House the view that it was inconsistent with the other portion of the speech of the Secretary of State—the more excellent portion of that speech—that we should have too much in view the condition of these low-grade ores and the purpose of getting labour very cheap. We could not dispossess ourselves of the enormous responsibility that weighed upon us on this question, which had been augmented by the circumstances and promises of the war. If it were true, as the Secretary of State told them, that this was not merely the native labour question, but the labour question as a whole—the fact that white labour would not compete with black labour, and if they were compelled for all time to rely on this servile class—a class which was never to rise, even in the persons of its most chosen citizens, out of its dependent position, and never to obtain anything in the nature of citizenship—they were discussing something which was not the native labour question, but the whole future of South Africa. The prosperity of that country depended on the contentment of the working class. It was a commonplace of all those who had watched governmental questions throughout Africa that no colony in Africa could permanently succeed until the contentment of the blacks was obtained. The prosperity of South Africa must depend on the native, and therefore there was no question which affected so much the future of that country as that of native labour.

Mr. BRIGG (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley) seconded the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'That' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'this House calls on His Majesty's Government before acting, in the case of Crown Colonies or Protectorates in South Africa, on any agreement as to Native labour or Native taxation come to by the recent conference, to place the proposals before Parliament.'"—(*Sir Charles Dilke.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

SIR JOHN GORST (Cambridge University) said that since he asked a Question of his right hon. friend the Secretary for the Colonies a day or two ago on this subject, a speech by Lord Lansdowne to a deputation of missionaries yesterday had thrown a flood of light upon it. He should like to express the pleasure with which he read of the firm determination of Lord Lansdowne to consider and uphold the rights of the natives in Central Africa. He should like to say that he did not attribute either to Lord Lansdowne or to the Secretary for the Colonies any lukewarmness in this matter, and any observations he made to the House would not be made with the intention of attacking them in any way, but rather to strengthen their hands in the extremely difficult task they had before them. He should like to say, in the first place, that it was rather often that men of the world and business people undervalued the testimony of missionaries in regard to the social condition and character of native races. In his earlier days he had rather singular opportunities of testing the value of missionary evidence in the Colony of New Zealand, and that experience had impressed upon him, throughout life, the conviction that there was no class of men on whom they could more safely rely to give evidence as to the character and condition of native races than missionaries. Their testimony was always disinterested. They had no interested motive to follow, and very often from them alone could knowledge be obtained in regard to natives, and the purposes for which they might be employed. He naturally looked to the objections of the missionaries to the transference of negro labour from Central East Africa to the Transvaal. These were objections which Lord Lansdowne said would be very carefully considered. He had no doubt they would be carefully considered, not only by Lord Lansdowne, but by His Majesty's Government generally. These were the main objections. First, the complete severance of family ties. He hoped the House of Commons would not mock at the family ties of a negro. There were some matters in which undoubtedly the white races were superior to the savage, but in regard to family ties, the love of children, attachment to fathers and mothers, and general love of their families, he believed most civilised people differed very little from the black races. Indeed, he was not sure whether the superior cultivation of our intellects might not to some extent make us a little less quick and earnest in the emotional part of our nature than those native races. Undoubtedly, in the case of the negro family, the absence of the head of the house for a year in a foreign country where he was never heard of, and during which time no communication from him ever reached his home, was an evil which was little compensated for at the end of the year, even if the negro made ample wages in the meantime.

The second objection was the lack of labour in Central Africa itself. This was a matter which appeared to him to weigh very strongly indeed upon Lord Lansdowne, so much so that he told the deputation that he had hesitated considerably before he agreed to the proposal, and that he had only yielded when he received a telegram from an official agent in South Africa to say that 1,000 men could be spared without interfering with local demands. It appeared to him that the duty of the Government which had undertaken the Protectorate of Central Africa was to make the interests of Central Africa in this matter its first consideration. He doubted whether any consideration ought to allow the interests of Central Africa to be sacrificed to the interests of the Transvaal. The third objection was drawn from the experience of what had taken place in past times. It was the same sort of experience which he thought everybody had had when uncivilised labour was transferred from one place to another. There had been negroes sent to South Africa, and after working there they had generally gone back very much deteriorated in their moral character. They acquired the habit especially of drinking, and were very much less desirable citizens to the country to which they returned than they were before they went away. That was common experience, and the missionaries believed that was very likely to happen in Africa. The last objection was that of health. It was confessed by our medical authorities that the removal of the inhabitants of a torrid region to a temperate region was an extremely dangerous and hazardous experiment. He had this strongly impressed on himself in his earlier days, because the late Bishop Selwyn and Bishop Patteson were in the habit of bringing a number of young Polynesian boys from the tropical islands north of New Zealand to New Zealand. But this was put a stop to because it was found impossible, with all the care and the best medical advice that could be bestowed, to prevent these boys from attacks of dysentery, which decimated those who were brought. It was in consequence of that that the native college in New Zealand was entirely abandoned, and that a college was established in a more suitable climate.

It was impossible to read Lord Lansdowne's speech yesterday without coming to the conclusion that it was not the interest of Central Africa, but that it was overwhelmingly the interest of South Africa which had brought him to consent to the scheme. He spoke of the disastrous effect in South Africa of protracted wars. We here had done our best to remedy the effects of the recent disastrous war, and we were in duty bound to make every sacrifice to redeem the country as far as possible. This House had never objected to vote large sums of money to do away as far as possible with the result of the Transvaal War. But Lord Lansdowne stated to the deputation that the

Transvaal was clamouring for labour. He was not at all sure but that in those words Lord Lansdowne had let out the real pressure which was brought to bear on His Majesty's Government, and which this House should refuse to entertain. He also spoke of the only way of teaching these natives to work hard. Why should we teach these natives to work hard? If Providence had placed them in a richly cultivated country where they could live a happy and contented life without any very hard labour, why were we interfering? This was admittedly an experiment. Now, what was to happen after the experiment was made? First of all, suppose the experiment failed. He was supposing that those natives, when they were brought to the Transvaal, either would not learn to work hard, or died off like flies from diseases of a temperate climate, or in some way failed, that the lives of some of these unfortunate men would be sacrificed and their families left desolate, and that nothing further would be done. Lord Lansdowne hinted to the deputation that, if it was found impossible to carry out the proposed transaction under the proposed conditions, it would be rather a good thing. But suppose that the experiment succeeded, and that these men worked well in the mines, that they were orderly when they were there, and that they could stand the climate, what were we going to do? Were we going to depopulate all Central Africa and all Eastern Africa for the purpose of providing natives to work in the gold mines of the Transvaal? According to the Agent in Central Africa, only 1,000 natives could be spared, but what were we going to do if the experiment succeeded? He understood from the speech of the hon. Baronet that the Native Agent was to be the sole agent for recruiting; but from a reply to a Question he put to the representative of the Colonial Office, he thought the Native Labour Association were going to employ their own agent, and take upon themselves the responsibility of procuring the recruits and of looking after them when they came to the Transvaal. He understood that the High Commissioner had nothing to do with the arrangements. The right hon. Gentleman the Colonial Secretary had promised that the conditions under which these natives were recruited in Central Africa would be laid on the Table of the House. He was specially referring to Central Africa, but what he was saying applied equally to the natives of Uganda or any other native races under British protection. He believed that none of these native races could leave their protectorates without a permit from our Agent or Commissioner, and therefore we were responsible for letting them go and for the conditions under which they were to work, and should see that they were satisfactory. The right hon. Gentleman the Colonial Secretary had promised that these restrictions and the conditions of the permits should be laid on the Table of the House, so that hon. Members could judge for themselves of the efficacy of the measures that were taken, and could strengthen his hands, if necessary, still more.

He would impress on the right hon. Gentleman the great importance of having the nature of the contract explained to the natives before they left their native country, and not when they arrived in the Transvaal; and that for two reasons. In the first place, it was most important to see that the natives went to the Transvaal of their own free will and were not coerced by the chiefs or headmen into a contract, or to go on an expedition of which they did not approve. In the second place, it was probably only in the country from which they came that any one could be found who was fully conversant with their language and could fully explain to the natives the real conditions under which they were going to the Transvaal. He knew that great injury was often inflicted in this respect on native races, who spoke an immense multitude of languages and dialects. It was impossible, very often, for any white man to understand what these men were saying or to explain to them what they had to do. Any one who had had to deal with the Polynesian races would appreciate that. Well, then, he should like to know particularly if this limit of 1,000 would be adhered to at present, and if they would have an opportunity of seeing the result of this experiment communicated to the House and to the people of this country before any further numbers were brought either from Central or Eastern Africa. He observed that Lord Lansdowne had stated that there was a famine in Central Africa, and his Lordship seemed to think that if this experiment were tried it would be better for these natives to go away to South Africa during the famine in order to save the lives of their women and children. He was not quite sure that that was a correct inference. The conditions of famine in Central Africa were very different from those of famine here. There the food of the native was grown by the labour of the man and his family, and if the man were taken away from his home for a whole year he was not sure but that at the end of the year there would be a worse famine than there was before.

Oddly enough, this very statement of Lord Lansdowne was controverted accidentally by a letter which was published in *The Times* that morning from the Rev. A. Hetherwick, of the Blantyre Mission, Central Africa. Mr. Hetherwick stated in that letter that the projected railway from the Lower to the Upper Shire River in Central Africa was about to be built, and that work upon it was to be commenced in April. That, of course, was an extremely important and valuable scheme for Central Africa. It would expedite the transfer of produce from Central Africa to the outside world, and the articles of our trade from the outside world into Central Africa, and it would set at liberty a very large number of persons, who were now engaged in the transport service, as soon as the railway was made. But this railway, said the missionary, would require a larger amount of labour than the Protectorate could supply. Not only was there this dearth of labour in the Protectorate but they wished to import labour from other parts of Africa, and even from the Transvaal itself. Mr. Hetherwick also informed them that there was a labour bureau in Central Africa, and that on their books there were applications for the services of 5,000 labourers who could not be supplied. Now, if the railway works were begun next month there would be ample employment for the starving people, and that would be a better way of doing away with the danger which might arise from the temporary famine than to transfer the natives to the Transvaal. As his last point, he would ask the House to attend to another statement by Mr. Hetherwick, in the course of which he said that there were hundreds and thousands of square miles of good land in Central Africa capable of growing cotton, tobacco, sugar, chillies, and other tropical crops, and which were only waiting the application of labour to it to enrich the world with its produce. Let the House consider—for the moment he put the question of South Africa altogether out of consideration—whether it were better for the world and mankind at large to employ labour on those thousands of square miles of land now lying derelict in Central Africa and to enrich the world by the produce of that labour in the shape of cotton, sugar, tobacco, chillies, and other valuable products which could be consumed by mankind, which would add to the happiness of those who consumed them, and which, incidentally, would create work in many industries in this country in supplying tools and clothes in exchange for these products, than to enable that labour to be employed for the purpose of extracting a quantity of dirty gold from the reefs of the Transvaal? Taking a wide view of human life and the interests of the world, and forgetting for a moment the interests of the Transvaal capitalists and the interests of the negroes of South Africa—quite apart from philanthropy—he contended that they should do as much as they could, and he was quite sure the Secretary of State for the Colonies would do as much as he could, to divert the labouring propensities of the negro into these fruitful and prolific fields, and keep them, as far as possible, from wasting their labour for the mere purpose of extracting from the earth gold which would not make one human creature one bit the happier.

*MR. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, N.R., Cleveland) said that the right hon. Gentleman the Colonial Secretary in the debate last week had protested with indignation against the idea that it would be possible for compulsory labour in any form to be introduced into South Africa. But it was notorious that compulsory labour had existed in South Africa. It had certainly existed in Rhodesia. Sir Richard Martin, who was sent by the Colonial Office to investigate into the origin of the Matabele War, reported that compulsory labour did exist in Matabeleland.

Sir Marshall Clark had reported similarly. Compulsory labour existed in the public works in Natal, and Sir Alfred Milner reported that compulsory labour had existed also in Johannesburg. He fully admitted that the Secretary of State for the Colonies and Lord Milner had resolutely opposed the introduction or perpetuation of any form of direct compulsion. Everyone who had followed this subject would be aware that the Secretary of State had, on several occasions, resolutely suppressed attempts made in Rhodesia and elsewhere in the direction of compulsory labour. But compulsory labour was of two kinds. They might go to a native and say, "If you do not work in the mines, we will fine and imprison you." Or they might say to a native, "You will be heavily taxed, and you will only be able to pay the taxes if you work in the mines; and if you do not pay, you will be fined and imprisoned." It was that kind of compulsion to which it was notorious many of the mine owners in the Transvaal desired to resort. He would ask leave of the House, in order to prove that statement, to make one or two quotations. Mr. George Albu in his evidence before the Industrial Commission was asked —

> "You would make labour compulsory?"

And his reply was—

> "Yes, I would make labour compulsory, and without using force, a tax could be levied."

Mr. Rudd, at the meeting of the Consolidated Gold Fields Company, said—

> "We should try some potent form of inducement, or practically compel the native, through taxation or in some other way, to contribute his quota to the good of the community, and to a certain extent he should then have to work."

Mr. Codrington, the Administrator of Northern Rhodesia, and Mr. Lionel Phillips, also advocated the same proposal; and the Report presented to the right hon. Gentleman at Johannesburg on behalf of the Chamber of Mines urged that "more legal and moral pressure to compel a greater number of natives in British possessions to work, and for longer periods," should be adopted. The late Bishop of Pretoria had written—

> "I am disposed to think some compulsion is necessary, or such steadily and regularly enforced taxation, and to such amount, as may compel labour to pay it; which comes very much to compulsion."

He could give similar quotations from speeches by Lord Grey, from the local Press at Bulawayo, and other sources. What had given rise to much alarm in the country was the fact that the Colonial Secretary had apparently fallen in with this idea of pressure by means of taxation; and in answer to a question which he put to the right hon. Gentleman last week, he said that he considered the present rate of taxation too low in some cases, and he hinted that the rate of taxation should be raised. In such circumstances, he submitted there was very grave cause for concern lest this monstrous proposal of forcing the natives to work in industries and under conditions which they were unwilling to accept should be adopted by the British Government. Very much the same argument applied to the wives of polygamous natives. He was not concerned, naturally, to defend polygamy; but many native customs were not so immoral as was frequently supposed. The practice of paying a sum of money to the father of the lady about to be married was not, as had been suggested, for the purchase of a slave, but was rather in the nature of a marriage settlement; and the cattle which were paid for the wife were maintained for her support in case of the death of her husband, or her separation from him. In order to show the excellence of native customs in certain respects, he would quote a custom in Uganda, the part of Africa with which he was personally best acquainted. There it was the rule that a mother-in-law should never enter the hut of her son-in-law; and if she met him on the road she was obliged to step aside and cover her face with her robe. Such customs, so far from being barbarous, had in some respects, at all events, reached a high point of perfection and refinement. And it seemed a strange coincidence that this attack on polygamy should be limited to South Africa, and should take place at this particular moment. There was polygamy in India, in Malaya, and in Central, East, and West Africa. England, as the greatest Mohammedan Power, had probably the largest number of polygamous subjects; but it was only in South Africa, and only when the natives were needed to work in the mines, that they heard an attack on moral grounds on polygamy, and the necessity of taxation in order to remove it. There was, therefore, reason to suspect some hypocrisy in the proposal, and that it was not merely the moral well-being of the natives that was the object in view.

The whole question came to this—What was a fair rate of taxation for a native to pay? That the natives ought to pay taxation was admitted. and they themselves were willing to pay taxation to a moderate amount. The right hon. Gentleman said that the taxation imposed on them could easily be paid by a few weeks work. In the first place £2 was a heavy tax, even for a miner. On the Rand, it amounted to one-eighteenth of his total income if he worked the whole year, and was equivalent to an income tax of 1s. 2d. in the £; or in Rhodesia, where the wages were rather lower, it amounted to one-twelfth of his total income, and was equivalent to an income tax of 1s. 8d. in the £. And then there was the indirect taxation to which his right hon. friend the Member for the Forest of Dean had referred. The natives were very heavily taxed on their blankets, rugs, picks, hoes, beads, and other commodities; and in Natal alone the amount of indirect taxation paid by the natives amounted to about £170,000 per annum. But apart from natives who worked in the mines, they would have to ask, what would be the criterion of a just rate of taxation? What would a native who preferred to remain on the land be able to pay? Many of the natives were steady agriculturists. They used the plough; and, therefore, did not depend on the labour of their wives. In South Africa women were not allowed to plough with cattle. Perhaps a native was living remote from a market and was unable easily to sell his produce. He preferred to live his own life in his own way. As was well said by one well-qualified to speak, "'To the native, the valley in which his kraal is built holds all that makes his life worth living." It would be a very great responsibility for this House or this country to say to that man, "You shall not remain on the land; we will impose taxation on you so great that you will be compelled to seek employment in the mines." That would open up one of the most momentous problems of Empire—whether they should force their economic system on the native races. If the natives wished to enter that system of their own free will, their responsibility would be lighter; but if they forced it on the natives, they would become directly responsible for any degradation that might come to many of those who should be regarded as wards of the Empire. Nor could they limit the matter to South Africa. If adopted in South Africa it would be regarded as a precedent elsewhere. It was possible, even probable, that minerals should be discovered in British East Africa; then there would be the same shortage of labour, the same demand for taxation, the same plea for indirect compulsion. In the West Indies the planters were often obliged to import labour, because the negroes would not work; and a similar claim might be made there. If this system were adopted as part of the policy of the Empire, it could not be limited to one part of Africa.

The right hon. Gentleman urged that if there were self-government in South Africa they would not be in any way able to interfere in the question; but even if it were true that colonial native policy would be uncontrolled under self-government, that was no reason why they should commit an injustice as long as the decision of the matter rested in their own hands. They should show an example as to how the natives should be treated. But so far from its being impossible to control the policy of the self-governing colonies, the right hon. Gentleman surely forgot that under the Sand River Convention in 1852 a special reservation was made on behalf of the natives, that slavery should not be permitted or practised in the Transvaal or Orange Free States. A similar clause, *mutatis mutandis*, might be inserted in the constitution that would later be granted to the new territories, referring not merely to slavery, but to indirect compulsion to secure native labour. In addition, if self-governing institutions were established, the Colonial Secretary would still have the right of veto upon all measures adopted in those territories. The right hon. Gentleman had used that right himself with regard to the Sugar Works Guarantee Act passed in Queensland, on the ground of certain regulations affecting Asiatic labour. He submitted that England had a right to a voice in this matter. The sacrifices this country made in the war, partly on behalf of the natives, gave them a claim to insist that British ideas as well as colonial ideas should be consulted in the settlement of the native question. One of the chief proposals now made was that native labour should be recruited from the North. He himself was at one time inclined to favour that proposal; but, on further consideration, he was convinced that as far as Uganda, at all events, was concerned, no proposal could be more disastrous. He had had an opportunity of speaking on the subject to Sir Henry Stanley, whose opinion was entitled to some weight in the House and the country, and he held the view most emphatically that, to use his own words, it would not be merely a folly, but a crime, to enlist natives in Uganda to work at Johannesburg, as they would not be able to stand the climate, and would be certain to die in large numbers. Sir Henry Stanley's experience was that, if the natives of Uganda moved even a short distance from their own country, they died in great numbers; and Bishop Tucker recently wrote to *The Times* that in one expedition where natives were engaged as porters, no fewer than 2,000 of them died because they were removed to a different climate and fed on a different diet. It should be remembered that Uganda was on the Equator, and 4,000 feet above the sea, while Johannesburg was twenty-six degrees south of the Equator and 5,500 feet above the sea. It was as if the inhabitants of Morocco were set to work in Scotland, and not only on the plains of Scotland, but on the hill-tops. Sir Henry Stanley also urged that, as this country had now spent £6,000,000 on the Uganda Railway, it would be an act of folly to deplete the country of its most energetic, intelligent, and sturdy labourers.

He attended a deputation to Lord Lansdowne on the subject yesterday, and the statements made by the missionaries, who spoke on behalf of British Central Africa, as to the demoralisation which had resulted to the men who had previously worked in the Transvaal mines were exceedingly striking. What was the right policy that should be adopted? They, both political and from the point of view of public finance, all realised the immense importance of the prosperity of Johannesburg; but, surely, it would not be impossible under slightly different conditions to employ a larger number of white men, with more machinery, and to make that profitable by lowering the cost of living. Mr. Albu had said recently—

> "It was impossible to employ poor whites in great numbers owing to the inflated price of food-stuffs."

And that was the real difficulty of the whole matter, and the rings and monopolies which controlled the food supplies of Johannesburg were largely responsible for that difficulty. It ought to be possible, also, to remove the obstacles and deterrents which prevented the natives from going to the mines. It was not necessary to make wholesale accusations of laziness in order to explain the lack of labour. It was the Kaffirs who had built the railways and the towns, had worked the farms and plantations, had developed the coal-, diamond-, and gold-mines, had supplied the domestic service of South Africa—the Kaffirs, who it was now said were constitutionally unwilling or unable to work.

The House did not fully realise the extraordinary difficulties, the grave obstacles, which used to exist, and did to some extent now exist, to deter natives from going into the mines. Many of them had to make journeys of from 500 to as many as 1,600 miles in length in order to reach their employment; there was no accommodation on the roads, and many of them arrived in a half-starved condition; the conditions of the contracts were frequently misrepresented to them by the labour agents who were sent to recruit labour, and who were of the lowest and most unreliable character; the diet given to them was in many cases unsatisfactory; numbers went back suffering from scurvy; badly-prepared food frequently gave them intestinal disease, and in the mines of the Selukwe district in Rhodesia the death rate during the two years ending March, 1900, was no less than seventy-five per thousand per annum. They were compelled to associate with men of other tribes in the compounds; they suffered many petty injustices through the difficulty in making themselves understood; in many cases the wages contracted to be paid to them were not paid; they were exposed to the temptation to drink, which many of them were unable to resist, and the result was that many of them took home little or no savings. In consequence of these things the missionaries were often unwilling to let those under their influence go to the mines. On the whole, it was rather surprising that so many went to the mines rather than that there should be a shortage of labour. Let these obstacles be removed, as Lord Milner was actively endeavouring to remove them, and the question would in large measure solve itself. There was no need to force them into the mines by taxes; to whip them to work with an economic sjambok. Could these blacks make their voices heard in that House, they would say to them: "You have taken away our independence, and to that we submit; you have occupied our land, and we do not protest; you ask us to contribute to the upkeep of your revenue, and we are willing to do so according to our means; but we ask to be allowed to live our own lives in our own way on our own land, without being forced into your economic system." That was not an extravagant demand. It was a demand within their rights. Those people looked to this House as the guardian of their rights. The right hon. Gentleman in a speech at Kimberley, in a glowing description of the future of the Empire, spoke of the Empire as "based on the ideals of humanity, justice and freedom." Those were principles which should not be kept merely for the uses of a peroration, but ought to be maintained as permanent guides of our policy.

MR. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield) said there were four propositions it was essential for the House to apprehend in order to arrive at a proper understanding of the conditions of South Africa. He was one of those who believed that there never could be, in a country where white and black races had to live together, any question of equality. No white man, so far as he was aware, in South Africa had ever been in competition with black labour. It was futile to refer to Australia and other countries where no black labour existed, because where no black labour existed the colonists had a right to say that the colonies should depend solely on white men, and not upon the introduction of black or coloured races. The prosperity of South Africa depended, not on agriculture, but on the mines of the Transvaal, and hon. Members who denied that must arrive at the same conclusion when they reflected that all the improvements that had taken place in that country had been the result of the mining industry, and no other, and all prosperity could come from no other source. It was only from proper attention being paid to the development of the resources of the Transvaal that prosperity could come both now and in the future to the whole of South Africa. There were two paths which the Government might follow. In the first place the Kaffir in South Africa will not work, and it is idle to suppose sufficient labour could be obtained unless the Kaffir was forced to work. At this time the field from which labour was recruited in South Africa was exhausted, and pressure had been put upon the natives to come from Portuguese East Africa, and the question which the House had to consider now was whether they were going to allow the system of forced labour which was the only method by which the resources of that country could be continued, or would they take the only other possible alternative which could be taken with advantage to the country?

There was nobody in this House or in South Africa who advocated forced labour. That idea was repudiated in South Africa and by all sections of this House. He had met Kaffirs coming down from Central Africa itself. The great majority of them, except those who came from Portuguese East Africa, came voluntarily. He admitted that the majority came from Portuguese East Africa, and they came because they were forced by the Portuguese officials, who got a bonus for those they sent, but there was no proved system of slavery under the old Government. The only proved system of slavery was that introduced by the Chartered Company. The point he desired to call to the attention of the Government was the choice of two alternatives: they must either rely on what labour could be got in South Africa, or introduce labour from outside. A very strong feeling existed on that side of the House that labour should not be introduced into South Africa from outside, but he was unable to see any argument which could reasonably be urged against such introduction. Was it not just as reasonable to bring men from India as Kaffirs from Uganda? If coolies were brought under indenture to Cape Colony, it was no more wrong to go farther and bring in any class of labour that was willing to work at a reasonable wage. To work the mines by white labour the whole rate of wages would have to be reduced to a nominal sum. The present rate was nearer £20 than £30 per month. Of the cost of production per ton of ore crushed, 30 per cent. was for white labour, 28 per cent. for native labour, 9 per cent. for coal, 10 per cent. for dynamite, and the balance for stores, so that for every £1 spent on Kaffir labour more than £1 was paid for white labour. It was impossible to work low-grade ores with white labour. The average production of gold amounted to only about ten and a half dwts. per ton of ore, except in the Central Rand, where the richness of the ore was exceedingly high. With the exception of about ten, the whole of the mines were low-grade ore, and unless labour was secured by which the low-grade ores could be worked successfully they could not look forward to any future development of the mining industry in South Africa. To have a prosperous industry in South Africa coloured labour was necessary, unless the wages for white labour were reduced from £20 to £5 per month. It was not for the benefit of the Transvaal alone that the gold industry should be kept up. The whole prosperity of South Africa depended on the gold mines and the mineral industries. He was strongly against slave labour, but the only way in which it could be avoided was by bringing in outside labour.

Sir J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.) said the last speaker seemed to use a series of syllogisms; they must have mines in order to get dividends; they must cultivate such ore as was there to get dividends; and if it was poor ore the only way was by cheap labour; the only cheap labour was coloured labour, therefore, coloured labour they must have, and so let them introduce natives from other parts who were more or less willing to work. He would go almost any length in supporting the Colonial Secretary in the great work he had taken in hand. No statesman in his time had undertaken so great a work and carried it through with greater resolution, perseverance, and courage; but he did entertain great doubt as to the result of the system of bringing down Central African labour to work in the Transvaal. Any sort or form of compulsion he was quite sure the House would be very impatient of; it could not be sustained. If the result of this experiment was a great mortality among imported labourers, he thought the feeling of the country would be terribly strong, and would not only bring the experiment to an end, but would have a very painful effect. Therefore he did not think it was an experiment to which they could look forward with any very great confidence. He wanted to know why were we to interfere and fall in with the prejudices of those who would not have the sort of labour which was willing to come and was fitted for the purpose? He did not think East Indians would do in the Transvaal; they would do exceedingly well in tropical climates. But the Chinese could stand the cold climate perfectly well, because large parts of China were much colder than the Transvaal in winter. He knew there was amongst a certain class of colonists great prejudice against the Chinese, but if we were going to get suitable labour for the mines, he did not think we should go to the least suitable field when a perfectly suitable field was open, if suitably tapped. Coloured labour must be got by paying the market price. Very few would view with favour any system by which any form of compulsion was applied. The rate of taxation indicated by the Secretary of State the other day seemed a very high rate, but he was quite sure that both he and the Foreign Secretary would take great care that this experiment was made with every possible precaution against abuse. He did not think it was one they could hope to carry far without mischief, but he did think that much better means could easily be found of providing labour without corresponding dangers, and that we ought not to lend ourselves to the prejudices of those who said they would not have Asiatic labour.

*SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.): I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Colonial Secretary will not consider that in this debate anyone has cast imputations upon him of not being desirous to protect the natives in South Africa. I have observed before that in my opinion he has exercised the great influence he possesses already in favour of the natives. He has successfully pressed upon the British Administration in South Africa the removal of those atrocious provisions in the old Pass Laws authorising floggings in order to enforce civil contracts. It was with great reluctance on the part of the British Administration in South Africa that the right hon. Gentleman succeeded in absolutely excluding flogging from the Pass Laws, and in amending those laws in the manner in which they have been amended. But what is the urgency of the present occasion when we have to consider what is to be done in regard to the natives? There is a deficiency of labour now, but there was no deficiency before the war.

MR. MARKHAM: Yes.

*SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: It was stated by the Industrial Commission in 1897 that they could get all the labour they wanted.

MR. MARKHAM: The report of the Industrial Commission was issued two years before the war.

*SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: The statement was that the supply was double what it is now. Why has it failed? Therein is the whole case.

MR. MARKHAM: There were 6,000 stamps before the war.

*SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: The hon. Member will allow me to proceed; he has had his opportunity. We have had different views expressed by the hon. Gentleman on those subjects at different times. I repeat my question: Why is there a deficiency of labour to the extent of 50 per cent. since the war as compared with the period before the war? The answer to that is extremely simple. It is found in this fact, that at that time, when they had 80,000 or 100,000 natives to work in the mines, mine owners were determined to diminish wages compulsorily, and they applied through the Industrial Commission to the Boer Government to support them by what they called indirect compulsion. Their desire was clearly expressed in their evidence. But the Boer Government refused to support them, and consequently they did not succeed in their endeavour at that time in cutting down the wages of native labour That is the true cause of the present dearth of labour, and the Colonial Secretary has alluded to that as a mistake. The mine-owners made more than a mistake; they committed a blunder amounting almost to a crime, because it is that which has paralysed and almost ruined the gold-mining interest in South Africa. With the establishment of British supremacy the mine-owners thought the time was opportune, adopting Mr. Rhodes's dictum that "the British flag is a commercial asset," and their Executive Committee in October, 1900, resolved that "the schedule of native wages in existence prior to the war should be abandoned, and that the minimum rate of wages for adult native labour should be 30s. per month of thirty working days, or 1s. per diem, and the maximum 35s. per month of thirty-one days, or 1s. 2d. per diem." There were provisions for payment of higher wages in specific cases; but throughout 1901, when the mines began to work again, there were 18,000 natives employed, and the average of wages paid was 31s. a month, and therefore the whole of the wages were practically upon the lowest scale during the whole of that period. That is the cause, in my opinion, of the deficiency in native labour at the present time in South Africa, and nothing else.

Of course the knowledge of this spread through all the sources from which native labour is obtained; the supply of labour ceased naturally, and the difficulty in working the mines followed. In 1902 the mine owners began to discover what their insensate policy had produced, and to some extent they raised their scale of payment; but it will take a long time to undo the effects which their policy had brought about. I was very glad to hear that at the Guildhall the other day the Colonial Secretary rehabilitated the Boer character and did justice to Boer treatment of the natives. There has been a good deal of very discreditable vilification of the Boers, not only in their own personal character but also in respect of their treatment of the natives. We were accustomed to hear that as one result of the war the native would be redeemed from the brutal oppression of the Boers. We now learn that there was no foundation for the allegations indulged in, and many people have cause to be heartily ashamed of the language used as to the treatment by the Boers of the natives. The native of South Africa, too, was described as a brute only fit to be used as a beast of burden; but, in fact, when properly treated and properly paid he is an industrious labourer, and nearly the whole manual industry of South Africa is accomplished by the Kaffirs. Practically speaking the manual labour has been theirs, and it is time that the truth should be told as to the character of the Boers and the nature of the Kaffirs. I have read within the last fortnight a speech made upon this subject by a very high authority in South Africa, Sir Percy FitzPatrick, and he says—

> "The rate of progress was determined by the supply of native labour. Prior to this war the maximum supply was to the mines 96,704; to the towns 25,000. They were still short of the previous complement of the mines by 50,736."

That was just about half the number they had got previous to the war. The hon. Member for Mansfield corrected me just now, but perhaps he will accept the authority of Sir Percy FitzPatrick upon that subject. Sir Percy proceeds to say—

> "Every man now seemed to be a kind of Pontifical authority on this labour question. The claims of this town naturally came first, and it had procured its complement because private individuals were able to pay much higher wages than public companies."

Sir William Harcourt.

What an astounding statement! Private individuals able to pay higher wages than the gold-mining companies of which we hear so much as the means of making fortunes, and as the chief source of their wealth. The gold-mining industry comes forward and claims forced labour, suing *in formâ pauperis* and representing that they are so poor that they cannot pay the wages paid by other employers in other industries in South Africa. That is the whole history of the deficiency of labour in South Africa. With a blindness which somehow seems to attend the lust for gold they have destroyed their own interests by their own conduct. What an extraordinary statement it is that these great companies in South Africa are so poor that they cannot pay wages according to the rates other industries can pay. It may seem strange to some who have not considered this subject, but take it all round gold-mining in South Africa is not a profitable industry. There are mines that are easily worked, but they have been over capitalised by people who think only of flotation, and their margin for earning dividends is not great. But there are a much greater number of mines worth nothing at all and never intended to be worth anything; they are like the razors which were made not to shave but to sell. These low-grade mines were not made to work, they were made to sell, and they have been sold, and the people who invested in them have been sold also. That is the history of gold mining in South Africa, and it is this which is now being discovered by the public of British gamblers. That is the reason of that singular statement by Sir Percy Fitzpatrick—that they cannot afford to pay what other people can pay. And why? Nobody will buy to-day what everybody wishes to sell — mining investments in South Africa. That is the paralysis that has come over the gold industry both in the Stock Exchange and Africa itself, and that is why in my opinion the first thing to be observed is that neither in the interest of South Africa nor in the interest of the investors in gold mines themselves are the counsels or the advice of the mine-owners to be attended to by this House. They have ruined their own interests, and if their counsels are followed they will ruin the future of South Africa. That is a thing which I would ask this House to consider, why it is, now the future of South Africa has passed into British hands, that the mining interest, which was to be so much richer after the war, is now in a state of destitution. We all remember one of the highest authorities — the authority of one of those American engineers whom the right hon. Gentleman referred to the other day—estimated first of all that the gain, "the commercial asset" of the British flag, would be worth, figuring it out at so much per ton, £4,000,000 a year to the gold interest. That was found to be a dangerously sanguine estimate, which was afterwards cut down to £2,000,000, and at all events they were to be better off to the extent of that sum from the British flag. Now all these expectations which had "boomed" the mining shares in the market have disappeared, and that is why people are beginning to understand the real state of things, and why they are so unwilling to deal in these shares. Therefore this is a thing we have to bear in mind, because as my right hon. friend the Member for Forest of Dean said—

> "What is to be your test which you are going to apply to labour? Are you resolved to lower the wages of labour until you make those worthless mines worth something in the future?"

Because that is the sort of plea that is put forward when you are told that you are bound in any event and by any means to make the low-grade ores pay. Well, what is the rate of wages at which these low-grade mines, which have paid no dividends, and in my opinion never can pay any dividend at all—what is the figure at which you are to place native labour, by some means, it matters not what, in order to make these mines pay? Why is it that all those great companies with their enormous capital are pleading *in formâ pauperis* for cheap native labour? It is because their nominal capital is such that with the ordinary market price of labour they cannot show the profits which they desire, because when you go to the deep low-grade ores the thing becomes still more impossible.

In my opinion the cause of the present deficiency of labour in the Transvaal is the attempt to cut down the price of native labour at which, before the war, they were doing pretty well. Now they have scared and driven away the natural sources of supply, and though I believe things are improving since they have raised wages in the Transvaal, that process will necessarily be a slow one, because of the foolish and insane policy of cutting down wages wholesale immediately the British flag was hoisted. That policy, as unwise as it was unjust, has done infinite mischief, which it will take a long time to repair. Now it is said that nobody is in favour of forced labour. Is that true? I see that in the Conference at Bloemfontein, one of the Resolutions expressed surprise. They say—

> "The Conference deplores the misconception in certain quarters in the Mother Country regarding South African native policy, and affirms that forced labour is not countenanced by any South African Government, and is repugnant to the civilised opinion throughout the country."

Well, I am extremely glad to hear it, because we shall now know what is civilised opinion in South Africa. As to forced labour, I wish to refer to the Industrial Commission, because Mr. Hay and Mr Albu accepted the proposition regarding forced labour. A question was put to Mr. James Hay, President of the Chamber of Mines—

> "Do you think it would be desirable to get forced labour?—Yes."

Then Mr. George Albu was asked by Mr. Smith—

> "Suppose the Kaffirs were to turn back to their kraal. In case that happened, would you be in favour of asking the Government to enforce labour?"

The answer of Mr. Albu was—

> "Certainly; a Kaffir cannot live on nothing."
> "You would make it compulsory?—Yes, I would make it compulsory; and, without using force, a tax could be levied."

> "Do you think you would get a majority of the people on the Rand with you in trying to make the Kaffirs work for a certain payment?—Yes, I think so."

That at all events shows that in 1897 there was an opinion in favour of forced labour. The Chairman of the Commission, Mr. Schalk Burgher, said this, as against the proposal of the mine owners then for forced labour.

> "One way to encourage them to come to the mines would be to give them facilities for coming here, to make their lives as pleasant as possible, and to pay them as much as possible

even more than at present, and that you don't want to do; whilst to compel them everybody acknowledges to be impossible."

The right hon. Gentleman the Colonial Secretary said the other day that the Boers had been entirely misrepresented when it was said that they were oppressors of the natives. That is the simple truth. They were the protectors of the natives before the war, and of that there cannot be a doubt. Well, this advice given by the President of the Industrial Commission was rejected, by the mine-owners, and they insisted upon not paying more, but paying less, and instead of making things more pleasant for the natives, as Mr. Schalk Burgher suggested, they menaced them with increased taxation. That was the course taken before the war. But Sir, when it is said by the Conference that there is no civilised opinion in South Africa in favour of forced labour, there is a matter of importance to which I shall refer. It was the doctrine presented to the Colonial Secretary in South Africa, within the last two months, setting forth the demands of the mine-owners by their representatives officially appointed for that purpose as to the deficiency of labour, and the remedies to be provided for it. These are the words in the official document presented to the right hon. Gentleman. It was called an "Industrial Manifesto." What they said they suffered from was "insufficient pressure on the native to make him labour proportionately to the white man." Insufficient pressure! Then that is defined as "more legal and moral pressure to compel a greater number of natives in British possessions to work, and for longer periods." Is that forced labour, or is it not? It would be impossible to describe forced labour in more definite terms than these. [Mr. Chamberlain shook his head.] The right hon. Gentleman shakes his head, but we shall hear from him what interpretation he puts upon the words "insufficient pressure," and "more legal and moral pressure to compel a greater number of natives in British possessions to work, and for longer periods" If that is not forced labour I do not know what is. I think it could not be described in more definite terms. They took credit in that document for being the only persons in South Africa who had reduced the pre-war rate of wages. That was the claim they made before the Colonial Secretary in regard to the deficiency of labour in South Africa. They wanted more legal and moral pressure in order to give them cheaper labour, and it was in order to carry out their desire, which was to reduce the rate of wages from what it was before the war. Now, Sir ,we have never had any official account of what was the answer of the right hon. Gentleman to those demands, and I do not think they are on record anywhere; I have attended closely to this matter, and I have never seen the answer which the right hon. Gentleman has made to the formal demands made in that formal document. Now is this the opinion of civilised people in South Africa? Who were these people who made these demands in that language. They were a body of engineers appointed to represent the great gold mining interests of South Africa. Their names are given in that document, and are these:—

"Eckstein & Co., Consolidated Gold Fields, Faison Brothers, Albut, Goery & Co., Barnato Brothers, Neuman & Co., Lewis & Marks, Rand Mines, J. B. Robinson, Bertinck & Deltelbach, and others."

Is that civilised opinion? We are told that it is repugnant to civilised opinion throughout the country. I suppose we must take it for granted that the opinions of these gentlemen do not represent the civilised opinion of South Africa. This is a serious matter; because these persons, with their great influence and great wealth, must have a very preponderant influence in the future over those colonies and in the counsels of the present Government. Where is the material that is to be found for determining these questions in South Africa if the opinion of persons in the situation of those whose names I have read are to be treated as not representing the civilised opinion of South Africa? Where is the British Administration to receive its advice, and what is to be the opinion that is to prevail in these matters? These are serious questions which the House o Commons with its responsibility will have to consider.

Then there is the question of increased taxation. I understood from the right hon. Gentleman's statement that the taxation in the Transvaal has been diminished to what it was before the war; but he gave some figures which I have not been able well to understand, because the figures of the taxation before the war do not correspond with those which have been recently given. Before the Industrial Commission it was stated that the taxation in the Transvaal amounted to 50s.; that is to say, there was a hut tax of 10s., a poll tax of £2, which was a new introduction in 1895—I imagine at the instance of the mineowners—and there was a road tax. But, curiously enough, that is the figure also given in the year 1901 by Sir David Barbour in his report on the mining taxation. He says that there was a hut tax of 10s., and, if there was more than one wife it was 10s. a head—not £2 additional, as I understand it now is. Then there is this remarkable statement. He says—

> "Neither the hut tax nor the poll tax is paid by the natives working in the mines."

I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether under the present arrangement men working in the mines are to be free from that taxation.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: No.

*SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: Very well, then there is not a reduction. Sir David Barbour says in his report that taxation at that time was nominally 50s., as against 40s.; that when a man was working in the mines and was absent from his home he was relieved from this taxation. But if you are going to levy it on 100,000 of these natives when they are working in the mines, or 200,000, as we are told there are to be in the future, you are enormously increasing the weight of taxation, and upon the very people who ought to be relieved from it. Therefore, this representation that there has been a reduction of taxation is a complete mistake. The real truth is, if you are going to put on this taxation — this capitation tax of £2 a head upon the men working in the mines — you are doing that which they have never been accustomed to before. They were always told when they worked in the mines for three or four months that they would be relieved from that tax. If you are going to tax them in that way it is not a diminution of taxation; it is an increase of taxation.

Then there is the tax on polygamy. It is a very curious tax. There used to be at one time, I believe, in England a tax upon bachelors. That was to do away with celibacy. This is an opposite system of taxation; it is a tax upon the number of wives, and the right hon. Gentleman said the other day, in this House, that it was a tax against polygamy. But polygamy is one of the customs of the natives; and you do not propose to put it down, because you know what the consequences would be if you were to determine to do so. There, again, there has been a gross misrepresentation of the state of things. I have seen in the newspapers speeches of gentlemen who ought to know better, who say that these Kaffirs buy these women as slaves. They do nothing of the kind. They deposit a certain number of cattle with the father of the wife. It is a custom among these people which is as elaborate as any British marriage settlement. The cattle are deposited with the father, who takes them as compensation for his daughter who is taken away. But he remains responsible for the cattle under the marriage settlement, and the woman, if she is ill treated and leaves her husband, has a right to come upon these cattle, in whosesoever hands they are. It is a very curious, very elaborate, and highly civilised proceeding. That is what is called buying a slave. But the custom among these people is that the male Kaffir has charge of the cattle. Whatever is done by the cattle falls to him, and the women work in the fields, as I very well remember their working in the fields in England. This polygamy argument, of which we heard nothing as long as the mines were doing well, but which has been invented now as an excuse for insisting upon forced labour, is repudiated by the recent Conference. The Conference says—

> "Except in Rhodesia the influence of polygamy on the labour supply is greatly exaggerated. Polygamy is decreasing from natural causes, the advance of civilisation, and the ameliorated condition of the women. Ploughs have relieved them largely from field labour."

The moment the plough is used the women disappear from the fields altogether, because they are not allowed to intervene in the cattle business at all, and the moment cattle appear on the ground the women are relieved altogether from the work. To my mind this grievance has been invented really for the purpose of bolstering up a tax on the Kaffirs. We desire that female labour in the fields should be removed as, in our own recollection, it has been removed in this country. But I do not think it is a very prudent thing to interfere violently in this form of taxation with the customs of these people. You are extremely likely to irritate the people and lead them to imagine that you are making war upon customs which we have always professed to respect in South Africa.

There is one other question on which I must touch—that is the question of Asiatic labour. It is said that Asiatic labour is only to be introduced in the last resort as the *ultima ratio.* But nobody can follow this matter carefully, as I have endeavoured to do, without knowing that that is the thing upon which the mine owners really rely. They are going to America to see what they can make out there about Chinese labour. I had thought the opinion of this country had been made up on that question, that the notion of founding a new British colony, of which the basis should be Chinese labour, would be a thing which would be repugnant to the opinion of every man in this country, as we know it is repugnant to the opinion of the colonies who have had experience of it. An endeavour is made to reconcile us to it by an assurance that it is to be done under the Government, and that every precaution is to be taken to prevent the consequences that are feared from it. I have read the opinions that have been collected in Rhodesia upon that subject, and I would just like to read an extract from the opinion of a gentleman who is very well known in South Africa, Major Maurice Heany. He is a great advocate of Chinese labour, and he says—

"There can be no harm in Chinese labour, because we will take care to fence it round."

And this is his description of how a Chinaman should be treated when he comes to South Africa. He is to be kept out of mischief in this way.

"The Chinaman, if he comes, must come as a hewer of wood and drawer of water—as nearly a beast of burden as it is possible to make a human animal into."

That is the prospect of staple model labour in a new British colony—

"And when his task is done, he must go. He may not become a miner; neither may he own a prospector's licence, nor a licence to trade. No white man may enter into partnership with him for the performance of mine or other contracts; nor may he enter into contracts on his own account. Above all he may not acquire, by purchase or otherwise, any house, lands, or claims, nor in his own right enter upon the occupation of rented premises. He will come simply as a labourer, and a labourer he must remain."

It is proposed to have 100,000 or 200,000 of these men, who are to be the basis of the whole industry of the new colonies, and they are to be kept under the control of a British Government on these conditions.

What is the House of Commons going to do in this matter? Is it going to accept the gold-mine owners of South Africa as its advisers in dealing with native labour? I think not. I hope not. We are sometimes told that it is for South Africa to deal with—that it must be dealt with according to the civilised opinion of South Africa. We have had some inkling of what that civilised opinion is. I believe that this question will be determined, as it ought to be determined, according to the ancient traditions of the English people, and in accordance with those principles and the freedom of labour, of whatever colour, that have been among the chief boasts of the English people both here and abroad. There has been in the world a good deal of criticism upon the war in which we have conquered. There has been a good deal of just approval of the spirit of conciliation in which we have dealt, by the assistance of the Colonial Secretary, with the injuries inflicted by that war. But I believe that the judgment of the world upon us in this new territory which we have thus acquired will be greatly and mainly determined by the manner in which we deal with the native races and with this question of the native labour. We cannot discharge ourselves of this responsibility. We cannot leave it to the interested parties to determine the policy of the British Empire in this matter. I hope the Colonial Secretary will treat it in the enlightened spirit of conciliation in which he has sought to heal the wounds that have been inflicted in the war; and in taking that course I am certain he will receive the unanimous support of the House of Commons, and that he will enforce the principles which are worthy of the name and the fame of the British people.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): I do not think I need detain the House at any length in answer to the speeches which have been made, for the second time, upon this very interesting subject. We had a very considerable discussion on the matter a few days ago, and I then gave to the House all the information in my power and a frank exposition of my views as far as they were relevant. I do not think the second discussion this afternoon has added much to our knowledge or produced any new argument to which I can be expected to reply. I do not in the least complain of the discussion, which has been conducted in a spirit entirely free from any party feeling; and I acknowledge the kindly way in which the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has spoken of me. He has truly said that I may justly consider myself as a friend of the natives, for I have, from the earliest days of my political life, taken a great interest in their future, and endeavoured, as far as I could, to promote their welfare. But, although the discussion has been interesting, I am totally unable to discover what is the practical issue that is placed before the House. What is the House asked to do; what is the Government asked to do; what is it our colonists in South Africa are asked to do? One thing I do glean from every speech that has been delivered from the other side of the House, and that is that there exists in the minds of those speakers a perfectly irrepressible distrust, almost a detestation, of the mine-owners. I would almost say that I should judge that their real object was, by hook or by crook, one way or another, to ruin the gold industry. Take the right hon. Gentleman opposite. How did he begin his speech? He began by talking about the lust of gold of the mine-owners, and about their wretched greed—language which is really, I would say, unnecessarily offensive. This is, after all, only another way of saying that the mine-owners, like other capitalists—for I would remind the right hon. Gentleman that it is not confined to mine-owners—seek their own interests, and endeavour to make the largest possible profit for their expenditure. We need not treat them as philanthropists; we need not praise them for doing their best to get the largest dividends. But, on the other hand, we need not treat them and speak of them as though they were the lowest of human kind. That is a great mistake, because, as I have tried to point out, you cannot separate these mine-owners, whatever you may think of them, from the rest of the British and Dutch population of the colony with which you are dealing. Anybody who goes to South Africa will find that the whole of that country at the present time is more or less dependent for its future prosperity upon the Transvaal gold mines. He will find that, in the course of a few years, there has been a gigantic development of that great industry; and that, as a result, thousands, and tens of thousands, of British workmen of the very best class have left their own country and established themselves—in many cases, I believe, permanently—in the new colonies. He will see great towns rising almost out of the veldt; he will see large industries contingent on that main industry; everywhere he will see development, all due to this one industry. The men who, by their skill, their capital, and their energy, no doubt not from philanthropic motives, but with the idea of filling their own pockets, have done all this are spoken of, and treated, as though they were pariahs, and as if their ruin would be a desirable thing and an advantage to the country. That is an absurd position to take. In future, do let us either leave the mine-owners alone or treat them with the same kind of respect with which you treat your coal-owners, your cotton merchants, your bankers, your financiers, or any other person who is engaged in using his brains in order to make his living.

*SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: The right hon. Gentleman has misunderstood me. My condemnation was that the mine-owners cut down wages, even against their own interests.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: That may be a very foolish thing; but, good heavens, if everybody is to be spoken of in such terms of violent contempt, and to be denounced, as from a pulpit, for their lust of gold and their abominable greed, because they try to get their wages lowered, what would become, I should like to know, of the whole manufacturing industry of this country? I thought it was one of the great doctrines and principles of the Cobden school that you should buy in the lowest market and sell in the highest; and for the life of me I do not see, under these circumstances, why the unfortunate mine-owner is supposed to be out of the ordinary run of humanity, or in any way different from them. My argument is, that as the future of the country depends, in the first instance at any rate, upon the progress of this great industry, it is our interest as a British Government and a British people not to discourage it, but to do everything in our power to encourage it. As a mere matter of politics, we want to see this great colony, in which large numbers of our own countrymen gain their subsistence, prosper. Their prosperity, and the prosperity of the Boers as well, depends on the success of this greatest industry; and without the capital which this industry and the contingent industries provide, you will not be able to develop the other mineral resources of the country, which are also important, and, above all, you will not do what I believe may prove to be in the long run (I do not speak of this year or of next, but of cycles) a source of great prosperity—you will not develop the agricultural resources of the country.

Any one who knows South Africa knows perfectly well that there are vast areas of country which only want expenditure on irrigation to make them as fertile as Egypt itself. It means, in the first place, a demand for the produce of the land, and it means, in the second place, capital in large quantities in order to develop it. I say let us treat this question of native labour, not with any prejudice, but simply in connection with the general prosperity of the country, and let hon. Members opposite remember this—that the violence of the language they have used on this question is as repulsive and as offensive to the Boer population as it could possibly be to the British population. Though it is perfectly true, as I said the other day, that I think the Boers were absolved from some of the charges that were made against them, chiefly, by the way, by missionaries and on missionary authority, in connection with their treatment of the natives, I also say that they take a different view of the native from what may be called the extreme philanthropic view. They do not consider that the native is capable of being placed upon anything like the same level as the white population. In my recent journey, one of the principal complaints made to me by the great Boer deputation at Pretoria, and repeated to me by almost every deputation I received, was that the Government ought to interfere to secure a proper supply of labour for the farms. The right hon. Gentleman opposite and others speak as if the labour question affected the mines solely. It affects every branch of industry, and it affects agriculture no less than the mining industry. What the Boers said to me was, that since the war, from various causes, the native has grown insolent, and squats on the land, and will not do any work. If there is any definite, strong opinion on the subject of what is called forced labour, it is to be found among the Boers, and not among the British population "But," says the right hon. Gentleman, quoting a document written by persons not as literary as himself, who do not perhaps understand the weight to be attached to distinctions of language, "These mine-owners say that the native must be compelled to work." Yes, but when they say compelled it merely means by legal and moral means. When you talk of forcing labour what you mean is labour enforced by physical compulsion. [Some OPPOSITION cries of "Oh."] You do not? Well, by slavery and forced labour I have certainly always understood a state that is produced ultimately by physical force. If that is not so, I do not understand the difference between your forced labour and my inducement. I am utterly and entirely opposed to anything in the nature of forced labour. I am quite certain that the resolution, it was not given to me officially, but I saw it reported in the papers, of the Conference says that no sanction will be given by any civilised opinion in South Africa to forced labour. But while I believe that is absolutely true, on the other hand there is a very general belief throughout South Africa that the natives should be in their own interest, as well as in the interest of the country, induced to work. Accordingly that is the only practical question to be considered. These names and charges, which are extremely offensive to the people against whom they are brought, ought not to be used, and we should consider on the merits the proposed inducements. Possibly it may be considered that they in themselves are objectionable; if so, it is quite right and natural that some opinion should be pronounced by this House on the subject; but do not call forced labour what is after all at the worst only labour which has been induced by legislation which indirectly effects that result.

*SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: The words I used were indirect compulsion.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Quite so. There are, as far as I know, two forms of inducement. The right hon. Gentleman said that he had not seen the notice of any reply I had made to the memorial which was addressed to me. I made no reply to that memorial; but I had many conferences with the mine-owners, and I expressed my own opinion very fully, and very much to the same effect as I have expressed it to this House. I urged upon them, in the first place, to induce the labourer to work by the ordinary means which people take—that is to say, by tempting them by greater opportunities of securing the satisfaction of their wants and necessities as a result of their wages. If you can increase the wants of a native you at once give him the desire to work in order to supply those wants. Take, for instance, the native in East Africa—the Masai; he is a savage with very little clothing, and very few wants; if you can induce in him or in his wife or wives a love of finery, a desire for better food, or a desire for clothing, you at the same time induce in him a readiness to work. That is one thing which I said, undoubtedly; in my opinion they have not up to the present done all that could be done in that respect, and I ventured to put before them various suggestions in regard to that matter. My right hon. friend the Member for Cambridge University says in effect: "Why should you induce this happy man to work? Here he is lying naked in the sun for the greater part of the day; he does not want to do any work, and it is not necessary; his wife, although not a slave, probably from affection, is willing to do what work is necessary in order to provide him with subsistence. Why should you interfere with this happy being, why induce or teach him to work?" If that really is the last word of civilisation, if we are to proceed on the assumption that the nearer the native, or any human being, comes to a pig the more desirable is his condition, of course I have nothing to say. But that is not the argument either of the missionary or of the civilised world in general, to which appeal is so often made. Although some ridicule has been cast upon the phrase—it is not mine, but that of a very distinguished missionary—I must continue to believe that, at all events, the progress of the native in civilisation will not be secured until he has been convinced of the necessity and the dignity of labour. Therefore, I think that anything we reasonably can do to induce the native to labour is a desirable thing.

The right hon. Gentleman gave us a great deal of information which is not new to me, although it may be to the House; but I could not really see in what way he hung the different parts of his speech together. For instance, he began by asking why there was any urgency in dealing with this question, and why there was any scarcity of labour. He proved to his own satisfaction that the scarcity was entirely due to the mistaken policy of the mine-owners in trying to get the natives to work at lower wages, and said that, if that were the case, of course the remedy was perfectly simple

—all you have to do is to raise the wages. I am sorry to say that that shows an insufficient acquaintance with the facts. At present the total number of labourers is probably as great as it ever was; but they are taken off from the mines to other labour. There has arisen since the war, in connection with the great development that is taking place, a very largely increased demand for labour; the extensions of the railways have taken thousands and, I believe, tens of thousands of natives; then there is a great activity in the retail trade, the demand for ordinary service has become very large, and the demand for agriculture is also very considerable. It is calculated that on the whole there are at the present time probably from 30,000 to 40,000 more Kaffir labourers employed in other occupations than mining than there were before the war, and that accounts for most of those who were at work at the mines before the war. But there are other reasons also working rather to reduce the number of labourers. In the first place, we are carrying out that excellent drink law which was passed by the Transvaal Government, but never carried out by them, with the result that at the present moment a native cannot get drink. I do not say that a native can never escape supervision, but the penalty for supplying the native is so high that I believe the law is very seldom violated. No doubt the greatest of all temptations that can be offered to an ignorant native is strong drink. That temptation has been taken away; and those others which, I think, will ultimately take its place have not been supplied. The mine-owners, and this is to be said to their credit, have always been among the strongest in favour of the strictest possible law against supplying natives with drink. They have said that while, on the one hand, it reduces the temptation of the native to work, on the other hand, when he does work, his work is better and he himself enjoys better health, so that it is not entirely a loss. In addition to that, the natives during the war obtained very considerable sums from both sides for labourers' work and scouting and other work; and until they have spent that money they are not coming back to earn more. Whether they are to be blamed or not, at all events, they are taking a holiday, and as long as it lasts that is another cause which has militated against a very large supply of labour. But the point is this, that when you have got as a labourer every available man south of the Zambesi, there seems to be very little doubt that you will not have enough labour for the whole of the development that is taking place in the country.

The right hon. Gentleman opposite asked, "Why should you work the low-grade ore?" Well, why not? Of course, it is a matter of common sense that the lower the grade of ore the lower must be the cost of extraction if it is to pay; and you cannot get capitalists to put money into the business if it does not pay. If it can be made to pay, surely that is a very good thing; for a low-grade mine requires for the crushing of a certain number of tons exactly as much labour as the higher-grade mine, and therefore, so far as the finding of employment for British workmen is concerned, the working of low-grade mines is just as important to us as the working of the richest mine on the Rand; and it is undoubtedly the policy of the Government, if it wants to secure the early prosperity of the country, to get as many of these mines to work as possible. The question of what wages are to be paid surely is entirely a question of supply and demand. In the first place, as regards the white man, he is able to say what wages he will take and what is the minimum. Probably the very high wages now given on the Rand to the European workmen will come down very much, especially when the cost of living is reduced, as no doubt it will be before very long. That, in itself, may make a great difference, and may displace some of the black labourers who otherwise would be required. When you come to the black, he also, if he is a free agent, is able to make his own terms. Hon. Gentlemen have been pointing out that terrible things will happen if the native leaves Central Africa; but are there not terrible things there? Cannot the conditions be put before them by the missionaries? Unless the native, after considering the whole circumstances, is convinced that it is to his advantage to go, he will not go, and if he goes to the mines and dislikes the work he can find employment in other occupations.

The real fact is this—that if you give only 1s. a day or less in Central Africa for work on coffee estates and offer 4s. a day for work in the mines there will be a great number of natives who will be tempted by the higher price; and my argument with regard to Central Africa is that in the interests of the native you have no right to take the choice from him. You have a perfect right to make whatever provisions are necessary to prevent scandals such as have arisen in connection with mining and other work, especially in connection with coolie labour. In regard to those provisions, I am, of course, in favour of giving the Kaffir who has removed from Central Africa, or other parts of Africa, to South Africa precisely the same protection as is given to the coolie who leaves India for the West Indies. When the deputation represented the other day to Lord Lansdowne that the migration of natives was open to great objection in that it led to the severance of a man from his family, and that there was a chance of his deteriorating among the populations of the towns, and so on, we say that every one of these objections attaches equally to the coolie from India as well as to all other classes of labourers who leave their wives and families in order to earn a larger wage than they could by remaining where they were born. To say in this parental way that we are to stand between the native and what I believe is to his advantage is perfectly monstrous; while if the statement is accompanied by the idea that somehow or other the mining industry is one to be discouraged and deprecated—well, I do not believe any sensible man would think of taking up such a position. The question of the obtaining of extra labour is the only practical question before the House on which there can be the slightest use in expressing an opinion. There is no question of forced labour or Asiatic labour before the House; and I cannot understand why Gentlemen opposite who feel strongly on this subject should not have reserved themselves to a later period, until there is really some danger of a question of that kind arising. Remember this, the vast majority of the people in South Africa are opposed both to forced and Asiatic labour; and, so long as that condition obtains, the Government are not going to force either compulsory or Asiatic labour upon them. The danger will come, if it ever comes, when the whole of South Africa, or the large majority, is in favour of the legislation of which the right hon. Gentleman disapproves, or is in favour of the importation of Asiatic labour; and if that time comes I would venture to say that neither the right hon. Gentleman nor the House at large could possibly prevent it. It is of no use mincing matters. This is not a question in which we can compel our Colonies against their will. It is said that though we could not interfere in the case of self-governing Colonies, we could interfere in the case of the Transvaal or the Orange River Colony, as they are Crown Colonies. I say no; I say to the House, as I said to the Transvaal. "It is true that for certain purposes you are a Crown Colony, and that the influence of the Government will be used for a time in order to modify any feelings of hostility which may still exist, and to bring you together and to make preparations for the introduction of the self-government you will ultimately obtain. Meanwhile it is in the interest and policy of the Government to treat you, in regard to legislative action, as if you were a self-governing Colony. We have to try to find out, if we can, what would be your action if you were a self-governing Colony, and to treat the matter upon that basis." That is, at any rate, the principle of the policy of His Majesty's Government, and if the right hon. Gentleman likes to question that policy, by all means let him do so; but there is no idea on our part of using our theoretical supremacy, in a Crown Colony government with a great white population like that in South Africa, against the feeling of the vast majority of the people.

Then, Sir, as regards this question of the supply of labour, as I have said, there is another form of inducement, and that is taxation. The right hon. Gentleman gave us a long account of his views on polygamy amongst native races. I do not want to dispute with him on the subject; but I will say that, if he is right in thinking that the purchase of wives is not to some extent a commercial transaction, and that polygamy is dying out, he must see that it is a matter of very little importance whether we put a tax on extra wives or not, because, then, if there are no extra wives we shall not collect any taxes from that source. But, on the other hand, if there are extra wives, let me say at once that, although the discouragement of polygamy may very fairly be an object, I do not think it could be put forward as the sole, or even the principal, ground for the tax. On the contrary, what has been said is that polygamy is an evidence of wealth. If a man has one wife and a dower he can afford to pay £2 for his wife, but if he has two wives and two dowers it might rightly be assumed that he is proportionately a wealthier person and can afford to pay. Whether it is because he has an extra wife or whether it is under the complicated marriage settlement to which the right hon. Gentleman has referred, he has a dower on which he can depend. In either case he is a richer man and can afford to pay another £2. If he has three wives the tax is increased.

*Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: Graduated taxation?

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Yes, the Government of the Transvaal have flattered the right hon. Gentleman by copying his graduated taxation, and in proportion to the wealth is the amount of the charge. Therefore I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will withdraw all his criticisms on that score. The present proposal is for a tax of £2; and I maintain, in spite of all the figures that have been presented, that it is on the average a reduction of the burden borne by the natives. As I have said the thing is very complicated. You may pick out a native here who pays more, and there one who pays less; but on the average this consolidated tax is a less tax than the burden put on the native by the late Government. But, after all, that is not the point, and we need not enter into any controversy on the matter. The question is, on its merits is the tax too high a tax? I say it is not. I say it is a very reasonable tax. I will not say it ought to be more; I have no proposal to raise it, consequently I will not commit myself to any opinion on the subject. I say at the present time £2 is a very reasonable tax. If so, as in the Orange River Colony the tax is 10s., it might be considered there to be too low, and I have already informed the Government of the colony that if they are inclined to propose a higher tax I shall have no objection. In the same way I have no objection to the tax being raised in Rhodesia, provided that we can be assured that such a tax shall not be too heavy a burden on the natives and is not likely to produce disturbance. On its merits of whether or not it is a tax that the native can fairly be asked to pay towards the cost of the Administration by which he benefits, I pronounce emphatically in favour of the tax as it is at present. Of course I cannot deny that the existence of the tax is an inducement to labour; for it is quite true that if the native sits still and does no work he will not have the £2 to pay for his wife, unless, indeed, he has an agricultural business from which he can hope to derive the necessary sum, but in other cases they cannot do it. Why should the right hon. Gentleman say that is an inducement to him to go to the mines? No, it is not. It is an inducement to him to work, but whether or not he goes to the mines is a matter entirely for his own choice. There is nothing to force him into the mines if he chooses to work on the railways, or on the farms of the Boers, or in the towns, or, as the Bechuanas do, in Kimberley. He has the choice entirely in his own hands. He is not forced or directed in any way to any particular form of work; but he is undoubtedly induced to work, and that is an indirect result of the tax. But I am prepared to defend the tax on its own merits without the least reference to the question whether it makes the native work or not.

I think I have touched on everything except the question of Asiatic labour. Well, why should this House undertake to instruct our colonies upon this matter? As I have said, the vast majority of the colonies have, unassisted by the wisdom of gentlemen in this country, come to the conclusion that they do not desire the presence of Asiatics except in Natal, where they work on the sugar estates; and I can conceive nothing really more calculated to provoke discussion which might lead to a change of that opinion in the colonies, than any idea on their part that we were taking upon ourselves to be their guides and philosophers in matters on which they are themselves quite as capable of judging as we are. They know perfectly well, and we know or ought to know, that they are just as humane, just as Christian, and just as virtuous as we are ourselves, and they resent this pretence of superior philanthropy which leads men on this side of the water to give them advice which they do not want. If we were a debating society I agree that all these questions are questions of very great interest and might very properly be discussed; but until this House can intervene effectually for a specified purpose I strongly urge on all friends of the Colonies and all friends of this country that they should not discuss matters in a spirit of what I must call carping criticism on our fellow-subjects abroad.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil) said that although the right hon. Gentleman had drawn a wide distinction between inducement and compulsion, his officials in South Africa did not conceal the fact that their intention was to compel the niggers to work. There was a despatch by Lord Milner of the 4th October, 1901, dealing with this very question of using taxation as a means of securing labour for the mines. In that despatch his Lordship said that he did not see that it was any particular hardship that the black population should find themselves compelled to work by the necessity of having to pay taxes. That was at least an open expression of Lord Milner's opinion, and indicated that the object of imposing this tax upon the wives of the Transvaal natives was to compel them to work. It was said that these poor natives were living a more comfortable home life than the bulk of the working class population in Europe, and that they must be compelled to work in order to learn the dignity of labour. The dignity of labour in Europe consisted in living in slums and labouring incessantly, and they could well understand the native objecting to recognise that form of dignity. He wondered how far the Colonial Office was prepared to carry this compulsion. The Colonial Secretary said that the question really was whether this tax of £2 per wife was too high. That, said the right hon. Gentleman, was the real subject under discussion. The House might not be aware what this sum amounted to. He understood from those who had studied the question on the spot that it was the ambition of the Transvaal native to be a husband of eight wives, and this would mean a tax of £16 a year which each native would be called upon to pay. He ventured to say that at the rate of wages now being offered, even if the native worked the whole year round, he would not be able to save £16 to pay this tax. If the native went to work the proposal was that he should be exempted from paying the tax, and how did that square with the argument that this tax was necessary to put him on an equality with Europeans? In regard to the lower grade ore he wished to point out that the work in which the natives were chiefly engaged was drilling or boring the holes for charges of dynamite. In other mines this work was not performed by hand labour, but by pneumatic drills, and therefore the alternative was either to obtain a supply of cheap native labour or introduce mechanical drills. Of course the mine-owners found that native labour was cheaper. Notwithstanding what had been said he ventured to say that this lower grade ore would continue to be worked even if native labour was prohibited.

It was only in the Transvaal territory that he understood this exceptionally high tax was going to be imposed. For the rest of South Africa, including Cape Colony, Rhodesia and Natal, the hut tax ran from 10s. to 20s. The highest native tax outside the Transvaal was 20s. per hut, but the tax now in operation within the Transvaal where a man had his full complement of wives was £16 per annum, and upon that basis could such an increase be justified apart from the necessities of the mine owners to obtain cheap labour? Disguise this question as they might, the question at issue was, would this House sanction forced labour in the interests of the mine-owners of South Africa? He trusted that the House of Commons, as the guardian of the rights of those who had no means of protecting themselves, and who were practically at the mercy of the millionaires of the Rand—who had shown their feelings in the matter by reducing wages by 50 per cent. since the war concluded—would stand between those natives who had now been committed to their charge, and prevent them being reduced to a form of slavery even if it be thinly disguised. Lord Salisbury said in October, 1899—

> "With regard to the future, there must be no doubt that due precautions will be taken for the philanthropic and kindly and improving treatment of those countless indigenous millions of whose destiny I fear we have been too forgetful."

The war was now over, but the Government proposed to increase the taxation of the natives eight-fold, and to reduce them practically to a form of servitude. In the interests of the natives, and to prevent the inevitable result if this form of compulsion continued, and in order to carry out the pledge given to this House, he hoped the House of Commons would stand between the rapacious greed of the mine-owners of the Rand and the helpless condition of the native races.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE asked leave to withdraw his Motion. Perhaps he might express, on the one hand, his satisfaction with the promise made by the Government to apply a system of enquiry as to the *bonâ fides* of contracts in all cases, and on the other hand he deeply regretted the expression of the intention to increase the taxation on natives in South Africa.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question again proposed.

*MR. ALFRED DAVIES (Carmarthen Boroughs) expressed his dissatisfaction at the meagre statement the House had received from the Colonial Secretary with respect to his recent tour. He was no hostile critic, inasmuch as he had sent his good wishes to the right hon. Gentleman on his departure, and had welcomed him on his return to the House. The Colonial Secretary told the House last week that £15,000,000 were to be given to South Africa, including free grants to the Boers, and to those British subjects who had suffered, loans, satisfaction for stock requisitioned by the military authorities, and other objects. And as he had received £30,000,000 from the Transvaal towards the cost of the war, he practically returned with £15,000,000 in his pocket. The war had cost £250,000,000, and he would like to have known whether they were to have anything more than the £30,000,000 from the Transvaal. He remembered that at one time it was said they were going to get £100,000,000 from the mines. The late Government of the Transvaal owned a great deal of property. They largely owned the railways, and were possessed of extensive tracts of land. These were assets of immense and increasing wealth, but the House had not heard one word as to whether the railway interests had been given to the present Transvaal administration, or whether the lands hitherto held by the Boer Government had been parted with. He should not feel at all satisfied if the British Government received only £30,000,000 towards the heavy war costs from the Transvaal. Was the Orange River Territory going to contribute nothing to the war costs? And were they going to get nothing from Natal and the Cape, with its large surplus revenue? If after spending £250,000,000 on the war, they were only going to get back £30,000,000 from all sources, he, as a British taxpayer, protested, and he felt sure there would be millions of others who would do likewise. He would like to hear from the Colonial Secretary what had been done for the benefit of British Trade. The railway rates in the Transvaal and the Orange River Territory, as well as in other parts of South Africa, were very high. Had he obtained lower railway rates from the ports to the Transvaal and the Orange River Territory? Further, the docks at the ports which belonged to the various South African Governments charged excessively for the landing of goods. Besides this, the Customs Tariff in the two new colonies was especially high. Had the right hon. Gentleman done anything for merchants and traders in the way of getting these railway rates reduced, and also the excessive charges made at the docks? The Colonial Secretary's tour had been a triumphant one on the surface, but he could not say whether it would turn to good account in the future. They could only judge one, two, or more years hence, whether the right hon. Gentleman had been successful. The House would realise that the scattering of large sums of money to the tune of £15,000,000 would naturally give popularity to the scatterer. He truly hoped that the right hon. Gentleman's visit to South Africa would bear good fruit. They all wanted to see the South African question settled satisfactorily, and they would not object to the expenditure of the £15,000,000 if that expenditure produced prosperity. But they must have what they were entitled to get from the colonies towards the war costs.

The Colonial Secretary, when in South Africa, had referred on two or three occasions to the money sent from the Transvaal before and during the war. He stated that certain persons would not be allowed to return until this money had been traced and handed over for the benefit of the widows and orphans. He would remind the Colonial Secretary that in 1901 he endeavoured to enlighten him on this matter. It had been and was in the power of the Colonial Secretary to trace this money. In June of that year he had told the Colonial Secretary in the House that £2,000,000 of Kruger's money had been shipped from Delagoa Bay. It was through the carelessness of the British representative there that it was not seized. He even stated to the right hon. Gentleman in the House that he knew the name of the ship the money went by, and that the person was in London who had discovered the two millions at Delagoa Bay. He mentioned that if the Colonial Secretary would appoint a time for an interview he would give him the fullest particulars. In this event the Colonial Secretary could have tracked the money. But no appointment was made, and therefore the right hon. Gentleman's present action was incomprehensible.

Reverting to the earlier part of his speech, he hoped that they had not heard the last of the question as to whether they would not receive a bigger contribution towards the war costs from the sources he had named.

Sir JOHN LENG (Dundee) said that twenty or thirty years ago a similar condition existed in Nevada, America, to that which existed now in the gold mining region in Africa. The difficulties were solved easily, naturally, and legitimately in the United States by the mine-owners simply giving fair living wages to those who worked the mines. He believed that would be the proper solution in this case. He hoped we should not relapse in our policy in South Africa from the honourable course we had followed in our administration of Egypt. Whoever had travelled in Egypt was aware that the glory of our administration there, the most conspicuous and the most honourable fact, was our abolition of that system of forced labour which had existed there from the time of the Pharaohs. He felt that any proposal to introduce that system in South Africa would be abhorrent to the moral feelings of the most enlightened people of this country. The right hon. Gentleman had vindicated what he spoke of as the pecuniary inducement, because it would enable the mine-owners in South Africa to work the low-grade mines. But was there any necessity for this? There were low-grade mines even in this country, but no one would ever think of proposing that they should bring those mines into operation and make them productive by adopting any system, either direct or indirect, of forced labour. He hoped that for the honour of our country there would be no proposals, either to import workers from Asia or to put even indirect compulsion upon the poor negroes in South Africa.

Main Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for To-morrow.

EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order for Second Reading read.

SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee) asked for some further explanation as to the extension of the surveillance of the police over children from fourteen to sixteen years of age. The question of the employment of children, more especially school children, was a very important one, and he hoped the Bill would be referred to one of the Standing Committees, where Amendments might be proposed. It would be improper to have a Bill of great importance passed without fair and legitimate discussion.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. AKERS DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's) said he had fully explained the Bill on its introduction; and, although there were some warnings from the hon. Member for Battersea of difficulties likely to arise, there was a general disposition in the House to welcome the proposals. For a considerable time the subject had excited attention both at the Home Office and the Education Department. Much light was thrown on the subject by the inquiry of a Committee in 1897 and 1898, and the Bill was based entirely on the Report of the Departmental Committee of 1901. While children were forbidden to work in factories during school hours they did engage in outside work daily both before and after attending school. This work was not regulated, was prejudicial to school progress, and was often carried on under conditions injurious to health and morals. The making of the bye-laws for the regulation of such work would be optional on the part of Borough and County Councils, and subject to the sanction of the Home Office. He knew that some of his hon. friends thought the Government were going rather hastily in the direction of interfering with the work of children and the help which they gave to their parents. But the Bill carefully provided that there should be full opportunity of enquiring into any complaints that might be made as to the loss to a trade of child-labour, and of considering the merits of the proposal. The Bill was essentially one for a Grand Committee. He would be quite prepared now or upstairs to consider any suggestions made by hon. Members. He hoped the House would now give it a Second Reading, so that it might be passed into law this session.

MR. ASQUITH (Fifeshire, E.) said his hon. friend the Member for Dundee was quite justified in saying that this measure, welcome as it was, ought not to be read a second time without some discussion. For his part he had for many years taken a very great interest in this subject, and he had the very greatest satisfaction in the opportunity this Bill presented of removing what he believed to be one of the most serious evils at present oppressing the children of our working population. The House was aware that to child-labour in mines, factories, and workshops protection was given, but the fact remained that a great body of children were without any legal protection whatever. He did not think he was exaggerating when he said the number was 150,000. There was abundant evidence that many of these children were being worked excessive hours, and in occupations for which they were entirely unfitted. It was high time to extend the protection which had already been given to children in factories and mines to this important and hitherto altogether neglected class. He did not think there was any doubt as to the expediency of dealing with the matter in this way. He had only one or two observations to make with reference to the Bill itself.

In the first place the Bill applied only to children under fourteen years of age, and therefore it was much more limited in scope than the Mines Act or the Factories Act. As to the application of the Bill the House would observe what was probably a good provision, namely, that it was left to local option. He believed it would be extremely difficult to lay down an inflexible rule for the whole country. Local conditions varied very much, and although he quite agreed there was a certain risk in leaving these things to local authorities, on account of their slackness in the initiation of the law, still, on the whole balance of convenience, policy was in favour of the making of the bye-laws by a local body rather than by a general law. He understood that the objection always shown on this subject by the parents of the class to which these children belonged was the unnecessary and perhaps invidious discrimination between different classes of labour. He thought ample protection was given to all those interests by the fact that the bye-laws starting on the initiative of the local authority had to be submitted to the Secretary of State, and that the Secretary of State was empowered and directed by the Bill to take into consideration all objections from whatever interested quarter they might proceed. There would be very little risk of any particular class being unfairly treated. That being the general scope of the Bill he called attention to a particular provision which prohibited the employment of children between nine in the evening and six in the morning. There was power given to shift those hours, and that that should be the general rule of the law would be conceded on all hands as absolutely desirable and necessary.

One of the great abuses under irregular forms of child labour was that children were turned out at three or four o'clock to carry milk, to go errands, and do odd jobs of one kind and another, so that when they went to school they were thoroughly unfit to derive any advantage from the training which the State compelled them to undergo. He was glad the right hon. Gentleman proposed to send the Bill to one or other of the Grand Committees, where its details could be properly threshed out. In the meantime the House ought to acknowledge the service the right hon. Gentleman had rendered in bringing forward the Bill at a period when there was a prospect of its being passed into law this session.

MR. GALLOWAY (Manchester, S. W.) said he desired to point out to his right hon. friend one feature of the Bill which he thought was going to arouse considerable opposition. The right hon. Gentleman said he thought it well that these matters should be left to local authorities. Therein he entirely differed from him. He did not think any Government Office in London could deal with matters of this kind, but he wished to point out that in an urban area, which for all practical purposes was one and the same town, there might be two or more local authorities. One set of rules might obtain in one locality, while no such conditions obtained in another. In that way not only great difficulties in administration might be raised, but a great sense of injustice might be in the minds of those parents who considered that their interests were prejudicially affected. If regulations were to be made at all it was essential to make the Act compulsory all over the country and to see that it was put into force. Surely it could not be argued that the children in one part of the country were not as important as those in another! He hoped his right hon. friend would consider this point between now and the time when the Bill would go upstairs. It appeared to him to be a matter of importance that the Bill should be dealt with in the manner he had suggested. The question of age would raise a serious difficulty; but that was a matter of detail and not of principle. He desired to congratulate his right hon. friend on having brought forward a Bill which he was sure would do much that was necessary for the children of this country.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston) said the measure was somewhat confusing when first read. It started in a distinctly permissive way; but when one got to the fourth clause, he found the permissive spirit considerably tempered by specific directions. He regarded the Bill as a very ingenious attempt to deal with the question of the employment of children. If the administration of the measure depended solely on the local authorities, very diverse methods might be adopted in different localities. But by the central control of the Home Office that was provided, they would have uniformity of direction; the conditions would not vary very much; and they would be able to bring about such control of children's labour as would remove the evils they all deplored. He hoped that such evils, which were a disgrace to our civilisation, and a great detriment to our young generation, would no longer exist in this country. That 150,000 children should be left without control as to their hours of labour was not very creditable; and he congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on having introduced a measure dealing with such a great evil. In the third clause they had a very valuable enactment with reference to the hours during which children should be employed; but the courage of the draftsman seemed to ooze out of his finger tips after writing the first two lines, because he left to the local authorities power to modify what was a very important and almost essential condition in a Bill of this kind. He was glad also that the second clause provided that children under eleven years of age should not be employed in street trading. There was to be no option there. Then again with reference to hard labour, which was likely to injure a child, there was to be no attempt to whittle away the provisions of the measure. He thought that sub-sections 4 and 5 of this clause were most valuable for protecting the health of our growing population, and preventing young children being employed under conditions likely to seriously affect their youthfulness and vigour in after life. He hoped the criticisms he had made would strengthen the right hon. Gentleman and his friends in Committee in an endeavour to make the Bill, if possible, a little stronger than it was in the direction of control from the Central authority, in order that they might, as far as possible, have a uniform system for the protection of the youthful members of the community, and that they should not allow children in any one locality to be employed at work likely to injure them. They should try to make the process, as far as possible, uniform and he hoped that, in its passage through Committee, the Bill would be strengthened as regarded the power of the Central authority, especially in reference to the first section of clause 3.

MR. PARKER SMITH (Lanarkshire, Partick) said he gladly joined with other hon. Members in congratulating his right hon. friend on this Bill, and in expressing support of its principles. Last year the Government Bill did not apply to Scotland; but a Bill was brought in to cover the case of Scotland at the instance of the great School Board of Glasgow; and it obtained very strong support from School Boards and other interested bodies in Scotland. He especially welcomed the Bill as being another step in advance in what seemed to him to be a most vital matter in regard to education, and that was the taking of the health and physical development of the children into due consideration. For a long time they had acknowledged the duty of developing the intellect of children; but they did not take sufficient responsibility for developing their physical health and physical training. There were a great many points in the Bill that would have to be considered in Committee. One difficulty would arise in connection with Clause 2, which dealt with boys and girls up to the age of sixteen. He himself felt considerable difficulty in going beyond the school age. One proposal that he strongly disliked was the penalty that would have to be put on lads and girls if they broke the regulations. They would be liable to be fined 20s. for the first offence, and £5 for the second offence; and in default, he supposed, they would be sent to prison. He thought that would be a very lamentable consequence of their endeavour to secure better regulations as to street trading. That was a matter of serious difficulty, and dealt with a point on which he did not feel the necessity for action as he did in the case of younger children. Speaking from the Scottish point of view, the proper authority to see after the bye-laws and regulations in Scotland would not be the County Council but the School Board. They had School Boards all over the country which were in touch with the children, and who could act through their own officers, and not through the police. Therefore, he thought the powers under this Bill should, in Scotland, be given to the School Boards and not to the County authorities. Once more he desired to express his satisfaction that the Bill was being read a second time at such an early stage of the session.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) said he was very glad the Bill had been introduced; but he wished to say a word with regard to the question of penalties. Take a child who had neither father nor mother, or who had not arrived at the age of sixteen. It might be very hard that that child should have to work in the streets; but would it not be worse if he were sent to prison. Some discretion should be left to the magistrates as to whether a child should be sent to gaol or not. He understood that a fine of 20s., if unpaid, would carry imprisonment; and he thought it was very hard that a child should be sent to an industrial school, as the Bill provided, for an offence of that kind. One other matter he would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman. He observed that the County Councils had power to put the Act into operation; but that if it were found that it was harshly used, or undesirable, there was no power to change the bye-laws. He thought the House should face this question as a whole, and having fixed upon an age at which children ought not to be at work, the House and not the local authority should enforce the law, because it might be that there might be men on the local authority who had an interest, or who were controlled by others who had an interest, in the law not being enforced, and in that case it would become a dead letter. He urged upon the right hon. Gentleman who had introduced the Bill these matters, which he thought were worthy of consideration.

SIR GEORGE BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said everybody agreed with the general principles of this Bill, but there were some points which, in his opinion, would require very careful consideration. It seemed to him that there was some hardship and a chance that the children would be worse off after the passage of this Bill than before. He was afraid, unless they limited the words "employ" and "employment," it would be almost criminal for a child to assist its parents in the household. Of course, if a child was employed for wages outside its own home that was a different matter. The House must be very careful as to these bye-laws, and see that they did not make it altogether impossible for these persons to live. If this Bill went to a Committee there were many points the details of which would have to be very carefully considered, and he ventured to think, though they were trying to do away with the great evil they all recognised as to street trading, they must not at the same time make it impossible for a child to assist its parents. They must not make it a criminal offence to do its best for those who have the first claim upon it.

* MR. TENNANT (Berwickshire) said most hon. Members who had addressed the House on this subject had urged that in this matter there must be uniformity of administration, and it did not seem to him that the Bill in its present shape would bring about that uniformity. This was due to the fact that it was not obligatory on the County and Borough Councils to make bye-laws. It should be made obligatory, and then it would be possible for the Home Office to co-ordinate those bye-laws and do away with what had been well described as "the industrial Alsatias" which now existed. He called attention to the fact that 150,000 children of school age were now employed, and of that number a large proportion was sweated in work places which did not come under the provisions of workshop inspection. He was particularly anxious that those children should receive the benefits of this Bill, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would devise some means whereby they should come under inspection. He should like to know how this Bill, when passed, was going to be administered. The Factory Inspector had no right of entry, and there were not enough Inspectors under the local authority. It appeared to him essential that some inspector should be engaged to look after these children.

SIR JOHN GORST (Cambridge University) hoped the Home Secretary would not abandon the principle of local option in this Bill, which was the most valuable part of it, because, unless the regulations were made with some regard to the social conditions of the district, they ran a very poor chance of being observed. This Act could only be administered if the local authority which now had charge of the schools took care that it was administered in such a manner as to enable the children to come to school in such a condition as to profit by the instruction given to them. It was not likely that two contiguous districts would have an absolutely different set of regulations, and if they had the right hon. Gentleman could easily refer them back to those districts and refuse to assent to them until they had been assimilated. He hoped this Bill would go through; it was a small step in the right direction, and he should, after it had passed, certainly ask the Government for more. He should press the Government of the day, whoever it might be, to clothe the local authorities with such powers as to ensure that the children were not only intellectually but physically trained, that they might grow into strong and healthy men and women.

DR. MACNAMARA (Camberwell, N.) expressed his pleasure at the Bill being introduced. It was long overdue. It was due in 1897; and in June, 1898, the right hon. Member for the Cambridge University ordered the inquiry to which reference had been made. In 1899 the right hon. Gentleman told the House the matter was of such importance that it could not wait any longer, and the Bill would now be brought in. Nothing should be done to endanger this Bill, which, although a very small one, would confer great benefit. But it was two years overdue. It was drafted by the Departmental Committee two years ago, and since then public opinion had considerably ripened. One fundamental principle recommended by the Committee had not been carried out. They had recommended a statutory minimum to which the local authorities were empowered to superadd bye-laws to carry the matter still further. The only statutory minimum in this Bill was that children under the age of eleven should not be employed in street trading. He hoped upstairs he should be able to persuade the Committee to say they should not be employed in trade at all. He should also suggest that the age should be raised from eleven to twelve. With regard to the other statutory minimum, with regard to children not being allowed to work between nine in the evening and six in the morning, subject to variations the Bill was nothing like so far-reaching as the minimum recommended by the Departmental Committee. These hours had been varied in the same manner as they were varied in the Scotch Acts. Another recommendation which had not been carried out at all was that which recommended a certain minimum number of hours. He thought that if a child worked twenty-seven and a-half hours a week in school, they should not be allowed to work more than twenty-eight hours out of school; that was quite sufficient for them to do. He was very doubtful whether young girls should ever be licensed for street trading, but he would certainly suggest that no girl under the age of fourteen should be licensed. He would suggest that street trading should be confined to girls over the age of fourteen.

A further point was that no factory half-timer ought under any circumstances to be licensed for street trading. He would further suggest, though he hardly expected to carry the House with him, these licences should be six day licences. He did not mind which day was struck out; there might be special reasons in some cases for including the Sabbath, but in any case, if they were in earnest in their desire to improve the physique of the children, one day in seven ought to be exempted. In the matter of definitions, all ambiguity would be removed if instead of those suggested in the Bill the definitions as set forth in the Education Act of 1876 were adopted. He sincerely thanked the Government for introducing the Bill, and even if he did not succeed in securing the Amendments he had suggested, he hoped the measure would be placed on the Statute-book in the course of the session.

SIR CHARLES RENSHAW (Renfrew, W.) agreed with those who thought that any compulsion that was applied should be general rather than local in its character. Whilst he believed that the raising of the age from fourteen to sixteen would be going beyond what was necessary in the case of certain occupations, and that such regulations would press very hardly on certain classes of the community, he thought it would be better that whatever bye-laws were made should be applicable either to rural areas or urban districts throughout the country, instead of being made at the option of individual local authorities. In regard to the rural districts, it would be very difficult to draw up regulations which, while preventing the employment of children in occupations in regard to which it was quite proper that such regulations should be made, would not apply to agricultural operations in connection with which no such restrictions were necessary. He hoped the Bill would be referred to the Grand Committee on Trade, which invariably had charge of measures affecting factories and workshops and so forth.

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) said it was a happy augury for the passage of the Bill that there should be so much unanimity as to its merits and the principle underlying its proposals. He believed that one of the chief reasons for its sympathetic reception was the fact urged over and over again in the recent Army debates, viz., the deterioration of the physique of the classes from which the recruits were largely drawn. If the Report of the Adjutant-General for Recruiting were examined, it would be found that the proposals of the Bill provided the remedy for many of the things therein referred to. He believed that a large proportion of the 33 per cent. of the recruits in certain manufacturing districts, who according to General Morris were rejected because they were incapable of passing the Army doctors, were boys who, between the ages of seven and fourteen, had been engaged in the very street occupations this Bill was designed to improve. It was creditable to the good sense of the House of Commons that it had seen, on information adduced, that the physique of certain sections of the working classes was deteriorating, and that having found it out it was willing to adopt a Bill by which a large amount of that deterioration would be stopped. As representing a large working-class district, he thanked the Government for introducing the Bill. The bread they were now placing on the waters would return after many days in the shape of improved physique, more vigorous constitutions, and a diminished number of unemployed adult workpeople. The Bill had not been introduced too soon; it was both desirable and necessary. As for local option, he was in favour of it when it succeeded; but if he had to choose between a lax system of administration by local authorities, varying one from another in their practice, and administration by a rigid centralised department, he would prefer the Home Office to the local authority.

He agreed with the hon. Member for Manchester that contiguous towns with comparable industries should have co-equal treatment, and that, in the event of, say, Manchester and Salford not adopting similar provisions, the Home Office should have power to compel them to do so. He did not think the local authorities would be so eager to adopt the Bill as the House of Commons, and he suggested there should be a clause enabling the Home Office, in cases of such reluctance, to convert the "may" into "shall." As to the statutory minimum, he agreed with the hon. Member for North Camberwell that local authorities should not be allowed to go below such minimum, but that they should be able to go above it if they so desired. Then on page 3, clause 4, sub-section 2, "persons" should be converted into "persons or localities," so that if localities made representations to the Home Secretary as to unfair administration by a neighbouring locality the right hon. Gentleman would be able to listen to them. As to the declaration that no child under eleven years of age should be permitted to be employed in street trading, there were children of eleven and children of eleven. Some boys of eleven, who had been brought up under good conditions, in good homes, with good food, and by good parents, were much more capable of undertaking certain manual occupations than other boys of thirteen, fourteen, or even fifteen, who had been reared under adverse conditions. In such cases the medical officer ought to be able to vary the certificate, so that children of eleven who were physically unfit should not be licensed. He strongly supported the proposal for a six-days licence.

Many Members would be under the impression that by enforcing the Bill an injustice would be done, here and there, to orphans. An orphan boy or girl of whatever age was a sympathetic figure, and the House ought to agree to anything that would enable him or her to get on in life. But they must not allow sympathy for exceptional cases to carry them away from the bed-rock demand of the Bill—that the employment of children should be substantially ameliorated. It was a remarkable fact that those who most strongly supported the Bill were schoolmasters, who knew the children in the schools; doctors, who knew their physique; and Poor-Law Guardians Why did the last named support it? Because they were continually having brought before them the evils inflicted by child labour, not only on the children themselves but on the parents, who too frequently were enabled to contract drunken and dissolute habits by the excessive over-work and the long hours of their children. He had been desired by the chairman of a Board of Guardians to say that one of the most fruitful sources of loafer fathers and dissolute mothers was the extent to which parents were able, by exploiting the labour of their children, to exempt themselves from working. Side by side with the grisly industrial fact that there were 400,000 adult unemployed, they had no right to be told there were 150,000 children able to work.

Let them go to Paris to see the way in which the selling of newspapers was conducted. In Paris it was much better conducted than in this country, where they allowed children between seven and twelve years of age to hang about in the streets selling newspapers until one o'clock in the morning. Instead of this Bill doing harm to the orphans, it would improve their condition, and all the Poor-Law Guardians would thank the Government. He believed this measure would do much to improve not only the physique but the rapidly decaying manners of the street children, who were not only weak but immoral in their habits, and blackguardly in their manners, simply because they were allowed to work in the streets when they ought to be in bed, or in the playground.

MR. SEELY (Lincoln) said he wished to point out one matter upon which he thought a great deal might be said. He was sorry that he could not agree with the hon. Member for Battersea and the hon. Member for Camberwell in regard to the employment of children under eleven years of age. One clause provided that a child under eleven years of age should not be employed in street trade. He thought it would be a much wiser course if that matter were left to the local authorities. He thought it was undesirable to make this hard and fast line. A considerable number of respectable children were employed in selling newspapers without any injury to themselves. He was aware that the conditions of street trading varied very much indeed. Street trading in a country town or a village was much different to selling newspapers in Piccadilly or in the Haymarket, and it would be better if this particular clause, instead of being made a hard and fast rule, was left to the local authorities to decide whether there was any reason why that provision should be carried out. With those remarks he could only say how heartily he appreciated the intentions of the right hon. Gentleman, and how he reciprocated what had been said upon this subject. He hoped this Bill would be passed, and that it would have the effect of improving the conditions under which children were employed.

Bill read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc.

COUNTY COUNCILS (BILLS IN PARLIAMENT) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

SECOND READING.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Debate arising.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.), said he wished to take objection to the title of this Bill, because if they passed it without some Instruction it would be impossible to apply it to Ireland. He thought it was most unfair that they should not apply the same law to all parts of the United Kingdom. If this was a United Kingdom, why should Ireland not have the same powers which they were now proposing to confer upon English County Councils? He noticed that the title of the Act was an Act to amend the Local Government Act of 1888. That Act was purely an English measure, and he wished to know if it would exclude any Amendment in favour of including Ireland.

*Mr. SPEAKER: I do not see how that can be done by Amendment.

Mr. T. M. HEALY asked if it could be done without an Instruction.

*Mr. SPEAKER: No.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said that unless the Government could give him some assurance that it could be applied to Ireland, he could not see why they should press the measure now. If the right hon. Gentleman would give an undertaking that he would consult the Irish Office, he should be quite satisfied to allow the Bill to be read a second time. He was willing to sit down the moment the Government would state their willingness to reconsider their position. When the English Act was going through Committee, the Government permitted a provision which allowed English County Councils to petition against Bills, and that was a very important provision. What had happened since was most important. Parliament had realised the necessity, not merely of enabling County Councils to promote Bills dealing with large areas and watersheds, but it had been found necessary to deal with other questions, because, by tapping the water in certain districts they were affecting districts far away. When they had this difficulty in England Parliament was on the spot, and near at hand, but if they took the case of Ireland they had the obstacle of distance, and it was most unfair to pass a Bill of this kind in such a way as to exclude Ireland from its provisions. Why, for instance, should the County Council of Dublin be deprived of the relief which would be given by this measure?

Mr. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) asked whether, considering the great benefit that the County Council Act of 1888 had conferred upon every part of the United Kingdom, the right hon. Gentleman did not think the time had arrived when he might respond to the appeal made by the hon. Member for Louth that this beneficent measure should be applied to Ireland. The conditions of the two countries in many respects were similar, and knowing something of the operation of the Act of 1888, and its effect upon London, he was convinced that an inconceivable boon would be conferred if Ireland had the same opportunity.

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Walter Long, Bristol, S.): I think the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Louth has overlooked the fact that this Bill is, in its present form, inapplicable to Ireland. We propose to amend the Act of 1888, and also to adopt a portion of the Borough Funds Act which also does not apply to Ireland.

Mr. HEALY: Yes, the Borough Funds Act has since been applied to Ireland.

Mr. WALTER LONG: We have considered whether it was possible to make this Bill in its present form applicable to Ireland, and I have ascertained that it is impossible. If the suggestion is one which the Irish Government will accede to, then it must be done by a separate Bill. I shall be glad to consult the Chief Secretary, if that will be sufficient to satisfy the hon. and learned Member.

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) said he thought this Bill should also apply to Scotland. In the Local Government Act for Scotland, the Clause relating to the Borough Funds Act was word for word the same as in the English Act.

And, it being half-past Seven of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned. Debate to be resumed To-morrow.

EVENING SITTING.

AGRICULTURE (WALES).

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.) said, in moving the Motion which stood in his name, he fully realised that the aspects of agriculture did not at the present time particularly command attention, either in Parliament or in the country; it was at present overshadowed by other and very important questions. But anyone who had any knowledge of the state of feeling in Wales upon this matter must know that it was impossible for any Welsh Members to allow any opportunity to pass without seizing it, and attempting to express the minds of the Welsh people upon this question. Surprise was sometimes evinced because of the decided views held by the people of Wales on political and other questions, and one of the main features which accounted for this characteristic in the public life and temper of Wales was the question of the land, which they desired to raise to-night upon this debate.

Wales had of late taken a prominent part in a great controversy in this country, a controversy in connection with education. Here again there was a direct and close connection between the convictions of Wales upon this and other questions, and the present organised and striking development of the land question of the Principality. Though at the present moment agricultural depression did not exist in any portion of the country, it would be the height of folly for Wales to cherish the notion that the present condition of things in Wales, with regard to the land, could be a permanent solution of the question. So long as the evils of the present system remained unremedied so long would there be a Welsh land question.

The debate this evening was interesting, by reason of the fact that on the morrow it was expected that a most important measure dealing with land reform in Ireland would be introduced in the House. Those who represented Wales earnestly hoped that that measure would completely satisfy the desires and aspirations of the Irish people; but it was quite evident that the introduction of a great measure of that kind, and the debates which must take place upon it, must force to the front the land questions of both England and Wales. His Motion claimed that there were special circumstances in connection with the land question in Wales which gave Wales a special claim for separate treatment at the hands of Parliament.

The case of the Welsh tenant farmers was that there was a defined and historic development and difference in regard to language and race, and habits of thought, and many other things between the great body of tenant farmers and the great majority of the landowners, and that that had created such a condition of things in the sphere of agriculture in Wales as to entitle them to separate treatment. This was not realised until comparatively recently, but in 1880 the feeling in Wales became accentuated and organised on this point. That feeling culminated in the year 1893 in the appointment by the Government of the Welsh Land Commission, which inquired exhaustively into all aspects of the land question of Wales. After sitting three years it issued its Report, which might be divided in two parts, one being the recommendations made by the minority of the Commission, and assented to by the whole, and which thus represented the unanimous findings of the Commission; and the other the recommendations of the majority of the Commission. He only desired to refer to those recommendations which, though made by the minority, were assented to by the whole of the Commission. The first group of recommendations related to the amendment and the extension of the Agricultural Rating Act of 1883. The amendments recommended were not only important in themselves, but also important from the fact that in the opinion of the Commission it would be well to deal with them, so far as Wales was concerned, in a separate Bill. That in his mind justified the whole case which he was endeavouring to impress upon the House to-night, because if a Commission unanimously said that in their judgment the circumstances of Wales were so exceptional as to demand a separate Bill, that went a very long way to justify the Motion.

There was a very important recommendation with regard to State loans to occupying freeholders, which recommendation was only justified by the special circumstances disclosed in the Report. To-morrow the House would hear what the proposals of the Government were with regard to the great scheme of land purchase in Ireland. He did not suggest that the case of the Welsh tenant farmer was at all on the same footing with that of the Irish tenant farmer, but to the degree of, and in accordance with, the measure in which the two corresponded he thought the same liberal financial treatment should be accorded to Wales as to Ireland. Very important recommendations had been made with regard to Crown lands in Wales and other matters; but nothing had been done by the Government, although those recommendations had been made. The object for that was not far to seek. The right hon. Gentleman opposite would no doubt get up and say it was impossible for Parliament to carry out all the recommendations made by the Royal Commissions which sat; but what did that mean? There must soon be some means of devolution devised; and he thought these matters should be left as much as possible in the hands of the people. One of the great points of difference between the tenant farmers of Wales and those of England and Scotland was that the bulk of the land of Wales was owned by men who had not in the past been in touch with the people of the country, or in sympathy with the modern currents of life in Wales, who spoke a different language, and had not been sympathetic with the aspirations of the people. That condition of affairs was, no doubt, improving now, but it had been going on so long that it had left its mark upon the agricultural situation. In his opinion, therefore, under those circumstances there was a special case for special legislation for Wales.

With regard to the question of land rental, when the late Mr. Thomas Ellis moved the Second Reading of the Welsh Land Bill in 1892, he quoted some very remarkable figures, which he had had from a right hon. Gentleman opposite, relating to the income-tax assessment in connection with the agricultural land in Wales. From those figures the House would find that in 1814 the total rental from agricultural land was £2,000,000; in 1842, it was £2,266.000; in 1862, £3,000,000; in 1882, £3,588,000; in 1892, £3,361,000. The increase in the agricultural rentals of Wales had been in the last century 63 per cent., whilst the corresponding increase for England had only been something like 16⅓ per cent., which proved abundantly that there had been at work in Wales during the last century influences which had created a different agricultural result which called for special and separate legislation. He need hardly say that, so far as the people of Wales were concerned, they would back up the right hon. Gentleman in any raid he might make on the Treasury for money for the encouragement of agriculture. He asked whether it would not be possible to obtain some provision of £3,000, £4,000 or £5,000 a year—it need not be a large sum at first—for the promotion and organisation of agriculture in Wales. A very large sum was usefully spent in Ireland through the channel of the Board of Agriculture there for agricultural purposes. Was it too much to hope that when such showers of financial blessing were to be poured on Ireland some of the drippings might fall upon Wales? In making this request for the separate treatment of Wales, they did not do so on any ground of social disorder. The Welsh people were loyal and strenuous supporters of the Empire, and they claimed that their farmhouses had been in the past the nursery of men who had played a not unimportant part in the development of this country. They believed that anything the Government could do to meet their wishes in the way he had indicated would tend to keep the best of their race on the soil under improved conditions.

It would be the means of perpetuating a gifted, educated, and, if he might say so, a religious race, and would add something to the strength and vitality of those dominions which were our common heritage. For these reasons he begged to move, "That, in the opinion of this House, the recommendations of the Welsh Land Commission demand the immediate consideration of Parliament."

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH (Anglesey) seconded the Motion. He said it appeared to him that this was an exceedingly opportune moment for a Motion of this kind. They were looking forward to another great Land Purchase Bill for Ireland. He could only say on behalf of the Welsh farmer that he wished he was in as good a position as the Irish farmer at the present time. In Wales they felt rather keenly that what had been granted to the Irish farmer because of his disobedience of the law had been denied to them because of their obedience of the law. It was putting a premium on disorder, and giving a lesson which perhaps they would not be slow to learn in future. The Royal Commission was appointed ten years ago, and did its work for nearly three years. It examined over 1,000 witnesses representative of landlords and tenants and the general interests of the country. It cost the country something like £10,000, and he submitted it really was gross neglect on the part of the Government to take no notice of the recommendations the Commission made. He would not deal with what was called the Majority Report, but he would point out that the Commission unanimously reported that they thought the circumstances disclosed in Wales by their inquiry urgently called for legislation such as they had sketched, and that it would be expedient to deal with Wales in a separate Bill. In Wales there was a cleavage between landlords and tenants in religion, language, and politics, and it would be idle for them to be blind to these differences. These were considerations which entirely differentiated the case of England from that of Wales in this matter. Within the limits of the constitution they had done all they could to bring this matter before the House of Commons. The thirty-four representatives of Wales had unanimously demanded a Bill dealing with the subject. England had never done anything like that.

He thought it was conceded on both sides of the House that the three reforms needed by the tenants were fair rent, security of tenure, and compensation for disturbance. As to fair rent the majority of the Commission thought that could only be secured by a judicial tribunal. Into that matter he was not going to enter. If they had security of tenure he thought fair rent and compensation for disturbance would look after themselves. What impressed the Commission more than anything else in Wales was the number of sales that had taken place in the Principality upon the death of owners of estates. On the sale of an estate the tenants were placed in a very precarious position, notice being frequently given to them to quit their holdings in order to give a free hand to the new proprietor who, in this way, got possession of the improvements which the tenants had placed in the soil. The Commission recommended that possession of the farm should be retained by the tenants for three years after he was served with notice to quit, and that in certain other cases the tenant should be allowed a year's rent when driven from his farm. The Commission also unanimously recommended that the notice to quit should contain the reasons for the proprietor giving the notice to quit. He need not tell the House what safeguards these would be to the tenants. He would not enter into all the details of the recommendations of the Commission. There were twelve in all on which the Commission was unanimous, and if the Welsh people had a Bill containing these twelve points they would be satisfied.

One unanimous recommendation of the Commission was that a loan of £5,000,000 should be given to the small freeholders in Wales, at 3 per cent. interest, who had purchased their freeholds after 1868. The year 1868 was fixed because at that date hundreds of Welsh farmers had been turned out of their farms because they had voted Liberal, and that had not unnaturally embittered the feeling in the Principality. He hoped that the right hon. Gentleman the Minister for Agriculture would not tell them that he sympathised with them on this question. They were very glad to have sympathy, but it was surely time that they had something more in Wales. He trusted the right hon. Gentleman would persuade his colleagues to give some opportunity of dealing with this question which affected so materially the happiness and prosperity of the Welsh people. They only asked for what was fair and just, and he contended that they should have separate legislation for Wales on land as they had on the education and drink questions.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this House, the recommendations of the Welsh Land Commission demand the immediate consideration of Parliament.—(*Mr. Herbert Roberts.*)

*Sir H. AUBREY-FLETCHER (Sussex, Lewes) said it might seem curious for a Member of a Sussex constituency to have any idea of legislating for the benefit of Wales, but, owing to circumstances, he was now placed in a position of some importance in the county of Glamorgan, and during the time he had been in possession of these large estates he had received from his tenants the greatest kindness and consideration. His hon. friend who introduced the Motion before the House had alluded rightly and properly only to portions of the Report of the Royal Commission, and had dealt chiefly with the report of the minority. Many of his friends on this side of the House who were interested in Wales, or who represented Welsh constituencies, were not altogether against the arguments adduced by the hon. Member; but there were a few points which he wished to be allowed to bring to the notice of the House which, from his long experience of and connection with agriculture in England, might explain some of the difficulties of the tenants both in England and Wales. He could say that his object was to help those who were on the soil to remain on the soil. When he went down to the Principality to take possession of his estates the spokesman who warmly welcomed him on behalf of the tenants, and who was over eighty years of age, told him that he and his family had occupied the same holding for more than 500 years, and pointed out men whose families had been on the estate for 200 and 300 years. He appealed to the hon. Member for East Glamorgan, who was present on that occasion, to confirm his statement that every endeavour had been made to keep the tenants on the soil, and that good feeling existed among all those connected with the property.

He did not agree with one portion of the hon. Gentleman's speech, when that hon. Member said he was anxious that the same tenure of farms as regarded leases should exist in Wales as in England. In the South of England, which he knew best, there was no such thing as a long lease, and hardly any lease at all between landlord and tenant. He admitted that many years ago leases were granted, but for some time leases were scarcely asked for, and were not desirable. He knew that in Scotland leases were very acceptable to tenants and landlords, but he thought it would be found now that yearly tenancies were more beneficial, both to landlord and tenant, than long leases. He did not suppose that the case of Wales was very different from many parts of England in regard to the depopulation of the rural districts. Year by year lads and young men were leaving the rural districts to go into the towns and great centres of industry, where they considered they would benefit themselves more than by remaining in the country. He wished that the Minister for Agriculture could suggest something that would prevent that. One thing that had struck him most forcibly during his visits to the Principality was the way in which the children, and even grown-up sons and daughters, of the tenant farmers remained in their own homes to enable the father to carry on the work of the farm. He only wished that they could see that in many parts of England. He had intervened in the debate simply to show the House that he was anxious for some legislative reforms being carried out in Wales connected with agriculture. His ancestors had been in Wales from before the Conquest, and he was proud that he represented a family which had tried to help in past years those connected with the soil. He would associate himself with the hon. Member opposite in doing what he could to advance the interests of agriculture in Wales.

MR. BLACK (Banffshire) said he had no connection with the Principality, but he supported the Motion of his hon. friend as coming from a different part of the United Kingdom, and as having had some experience of the effect of such legislation as that proposed by the hon. Member for Denbighshire. He referred to legislation in connection with the Scottish crofters; and he ventured to say that that legislation had proved beneficial to the State, to the tenant, and to the landlord. The hon. Member who had just sat down had implored the Government to do something to check the depletion of the rural population. Such a method had been found in Scotland, as shown by the Census returns. In Shetland the diminution of the population between 1881 and 1891 was 6·02 per cent., in the last decade it was only 1·90 per cent. In Sutherland the diminution between 1881 and 1891 was 3·89, and last decade it was only 2·08 per cent. In Ross and Cromarty similar results were observed, notwithstanding the economic conditions which led to a much greater depletion of the rural population in other parts of Scotland. This was due in large measure to the Crofters Acts, which gave absolute security of tenure to the tenants. The fixity of tenure had encouraged the tenants to spend their money in improving their houses and holdings, and in increasing the productiveness of the land, while it had kept the people to the soil, and had likewise benefited the landlord. He ventured to think that if similar legislation were applied to Wales and other parts of the United Kingdom similar results would follow.

MAJOR WYNDHAM-QUIN (Glamorgan, S.) said that as his hon. friend had confined himself to the consideration of the unanimous recommendations of the Royal Commission, he was happy to agree with him in what he had suggested for the benefit of the Welsh people. However, he did not believe that the Welsh people were entitled to any greater consideration in respect to land legislation than the people in any other portion of the United Kingdom. If the Minister for Agriculture could see his way to conferring the benefits asked for by the Welsh people, he could say, on behalf of his constituents, that he would be happy to receive them. The hon. Member who introduced the debate had stated that, during a certain period, rents in Wales had risen 63 per cent., whereas, in the corresponding period in England, rents had only risen 16 per cent. He did not think it was quite fair to compare England with Wales in this regard, because the greater portion of Wales was given up to stock-raising and dairy-farming, while a large portion of England was devoted to growing cereals. If a just comparison was to be made between Wales and England, it should only be with those portions of England where similar agricultural operations were conducted, such as Cumberland, Westmorland, and Devonshire. If the income-tax assessments from the year 1879 were examined it would be found that the rents in those particular counties were higher than in the Welsh counties. Then there was a difference between the conditions of agriculture in North and in South Wales. In the county of Glamorgan farms were held under a local custom, which had been established for more than a hundred years, and the tenants there would rather hold their land under that custom than under any Act of Parliament.

MR. GRIFFITH BOSCAWEN (Kent, Tonbridge) rose to continue the discussion.

Attention drawn to the fact that forty Members were not present. Numbers being counted, and forty Members being found present,

MR. GRIFFITH BOSCAWEN said he did not rise for the purpose of objecting to the Motion of his hon. friend, because, from the manner in which he had moved it, he had excluded the proposal of establishing a Land Court which had been put forward by the majority of the Royal Commission, and had limited his remarks to the unanimous recommendations of the Commission. That made a very considerable difference. Speaking not as a Welsh Member but as connected with Welsh land, he had much sympathy with the hon. Member opposite; but while the speech of the hon. Member was limited, his Motion covered everything. His Motion said, "That in the opinion of this House, the recommendations of the Welsh Land Commission demand the immediate consideration of Parliament." He presumed that the word "recommendations" meant the recommendations of the majority of the Commission. Therefore, he wished to move an Amendment which would bring the Motion of his hon. friend into line with his speech, viz., to insert the word "unanimous" before the word "recommendations." If his hon. friend would accept that Amendment, he had nothing further to say.

Question amended, by inserting, after the second word "the," the word "unanimous."—(*Mr. Griffith Boscawen.*)

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport) said he had a considerable right to be sympathetic in regard to matters connected with Wales, for he had a large admixture of Welsh blood in his veins, and he had, by accident, a very near connection with an estate in Wales. He, however, objected to set up a line of demarcation between the tenants of Wales and England which would lead to all manner of unfortunate jealousies. He was opposed to setting up in any way a difference of treatment of land tenure and a difference in legal position between tenants on either side of a purely artificial boundary, like a dyke, dividing Wales from the adjoining counties. Personally he could not vouch in one way or another for what had happened in 1868, but supposing that there were many capricious evictions in 1868, there were no such things now, and why should they legislate in 1903 for a state of affairs which prevailed so long ago as 1868? It could not be urged that the landlords were treating the tenants badly now, or evicting them capriciously or grinding them down, or that a sufficient percentage of the income of the estates was not spent on them. Therefore there was no reason for this differentiation of treatment between the tenants of Wales and those in the adjoining counties. Did the tenants themselves, in the interests of agriculture and the development of the soil, show any reluctance to come forward and take vacant farms? No hon. Gentleman would assert that anything of this sort existed. They in England would be only too willing to experience the ease and rapidity which obtained in Wales of finding tenants for their farms. In fact, there were many Welsh farmers who came over the border into Shropshire and took farms, and he himself had three Jones on his own estate. He protested against a difference of treatment being introduced between English and Welsh tenants. However moderate the speech and intention of the hon. Gentleman who moved the Resolution might have been, there could be no doubt that underlying the whole question was the desire for an alteration in the land tenure of Wales, and a distinct tendency to an approach to a system of dual ownership, which only on the morrow they were going to destroy, at a great cost, in Ireland. It could not be argued that any of those proposals would result otherwise than in establishing some degree of dual ownership, which he could only describe as a pernicious, wasteful, and destructive system—a system to get rid of which in another part of the United Kingdom, the House would probably be asked to vote millions in the course of a few days. The carrying out of these recommendations would involve the building up of a system in Wales similar to that which they were seeking to get rid of in Ireland, and he therefore entered his most emphatic protest against a proposal which would ultimately bring that about—a proposal in which he distinctly saw the track of the serpent of dual ownership.

MR. BRYN ROBERTS (Carnarvonshire, Eifion) urged that there were exceptional circumstances in the case of Wales which required exceptional treatment, and he pointed out that though rents had risen in pastoral counties in England, in similar districts in Wales the increase had been twice as great.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. HANBURY, Preston) said that if the Resolution had been placed before the House in its original form he could not for a moment have accepted it. He could not, for one thing, consent to any legislation for agriculture in Great Britain on the lines of the Irish Land Act. He could not consent to anything in the shape of a Land Court. Further than that, he would be unwilling to accept agricultural legislation limited to Wales alone. He could not recognise the distinction which had been attempted to be drawn between Wales and the rest of Great Britain with regard to the condition of agriculture. They must treat the matter as a whole. But with these reservations he was inclined to accept the Amendment which had been agreed to, especially as it involved dropping the suggestion for a Land Court. The recommendations of the Royal Commission, so far as they were unanimous, were chiefly recommendations which might be applied to the whole of Great Britain. There was the extension of agricultural education, to which there could be no objection. For his part he hoped that all over Great Britain more would be done than hitherto to extend agricultural education, and he trusted that even our country elementary schools would be brought more in accord with the surroundings of rural life. The same applied with regard to the education given in the various agricultural colleges. He was in hearty sympathy with the recommendations of the Royal Commission on that point, and he thought that the Board of Agriculture, in that respect, had done more for Wales in proportion than they had done for the rest of Great Britain. Out of the limited sum of £9,000 placed at his disposal, they had apportioned to Wales £1,800. Then as to the circulation of leaflets, he thought Wales had nothing to complain of, and the leaflets now being issued would be found to be of much practical value.

There were two changes he would like to see introduced. The areas dealt with by the weather forecasts were too large to make them of much value for individual parishes, and he would like to see some alteration made whereby the information could be more widely distributed than it now was. It could be done through the agency of the Post Office. In America mail carts in the rural districts carried a flag, which indicated the last Report of the Meteorological Office. He thought that through the agency of the Post Office something of that kind might be done in our own rural districts. With regard to the suggestion of giving farmers information as to the agricultural prices, he had succeeded in getting funds from the Treasury to carry out that recommendation, which was one of considerable importance to farmers. He hoped to establish throughout Great Britain a staff of correspondents which would give the farmers information as to the prices of agricultural produce. He had also done his best to instil into the minds of the farmers the necessity for combination and co-operation. As to local taxation, the Royal Commission had recently reported on lines very much as indicated by the Royal Commission dealing with land tenure in Wales; and the report of a Commission of that sort must weigh very greatly with any Government. The codification of the Statutes dealing with offences in connection with game, and the suggestion that the local authorities should have more power in regard to the regulation of commons—that additional power was given by the Act of 1899—were minor matters. The matter to which the Commission as a whole attached the greatest importance was the amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883. He thought nobody could deny that the Act of 1900 was a very considerable advance on the Act of 1883, and he was sure they wished to give it a fair chance, and to see how far it contributed to the welfare of those interested, before taking further steps. Although he could not pledge himself to carry out all the unanimous recommendations of that Royal Commission, he thought that on the whole they were admirable and deserving of the attention of the House. He had no hesitation in accepting the Resolution as amended.

*Mr. EDWARDS (Radnor) expressed the satisfaction with which he and his colleagues had heard the assurances given by the right hon. Gentleman, and he congratulated his hon. friend the Member for West Denbighshire on having been the means of obtaining so definite a statement from the Minister of Agriculture. The right hon. Gentleman had dealt with many small points of interest to agriculturists, but what they really hoped was that the Government would be induced to bring in a Bill which would give Welsh agriculturists security of tenure and greater compensation for improvements. There was wonderful unanimity on both sides of the House as to the necessity for doing something with regard to land tenure in Wales. The hon. and gallant Member for Shropshire had said he could see no need for dealing specially with the case of Wales as apart from England, but he would remind him that there had been no Royal Commission making recommendations with regard to England such as there had been in the case of Wales. Further, the hon. and gallant Member showed there was a great difference between England and Wales, seeing that tenants were not easy to find in England, whereas in Wales as many as twenty farmers sometimes applied for a vacant farm. They were only asking that effect should be given to the recommendations of that Royal Commission, and he submitted that the granting of these reforms in the interests of the Welsh farmers would not in the slightest degree injure the English farmer or landlord. He feared that the report of the Royal Commission had been treated with scant courtesy, and they were glad, therefore, to hear from the right hon. Gentleman that something was to be done. He hoped it would be something really useful—something mor than flying a flag from a mail cart.

Question, as amended, put and agreed to.

Resolved, "That, in the opinion of this House, the unanimous recommendations of the Welsh Land Commission demand the immediate consideration of Parliament."

FORESTRY.

Mr. J. H. LEWIS (Flint Boroughs) said he desired to draw the attention of the House to a question which was becoming one of great and increasing importance in this country, viz.: the desirability of further steps being taken for the afforestation of waste lands. He proposed to refer more particularly to the Report of the Departmental Committee recently appointed by the President of the Board of Agriculture. As the evidence taken by that Committee had not yet been published it would not be proper on his part to move a definite resolution. Still the question was becoming one of increasing urgency. A Select Committee was appointed to consider it in the year 1885, but he regretted to say that hardly anything had been done in the direction of carrying out its recommendations. Meanwhile our already inadequate stock of timber had been still further depleted. There were two cardinal facts in connection with the question which deserved the attention of the House and the country. The one was that the United Kingdom paid the enormous sum of £26,000,000 for imported timber, and the other was that the country contained 21,000,000 acres of waste land on a large proportion of which afforestation could be profitably undertaken.

Attention called to the fact that forty Members were not present. Forty Members being found present,

*MR. J. H. LEWIS, continuing, said he thought he could show that even under the indifferent system of management which now obtained in the United Kingdom excellent financial results had accrued from afforesting land which otherwise would be of little, if any, value. Some valuable evidence was given by Dr. Schlich before the Departmental Committee, which had sat recently, showing what had been accomplished by afforesting on the Continent. In one district, called the Anthonsthal Range, in Saxony, between an elevation of 1,500 and 2,700 feet, an area of 4,000 acres was treated. The receipts came to 48s. per acre per annum, as against 10s. per acre per annum expenditure—a net profit of 38s. per acre, on land which would not have been worth more than 4s. per acre per annum for agricultural or pastoral purposes. A like policy could well be adopted in many parts of this country. In Scotland there were large tracts of country solely devoted to sheep farming which did not support more than one man per 1000 acres, whereas if converted into woodland they could be made to support one man per 100 acres. That would help to stop the depletion of the rural population now going on, a depletion which was draining the best life of the country into the towns, and which unless it was arrested would result in disaster for the country as a whole. There was another aspect of the question. According to some of the best experts on afforestation the world was approaching a shortage, if not an actual dearth, of timber. This country consumed more timber than any other country in the world, and yet they were not making the best use of those natural advantages which they possessed. They could grow in this country most of the timber that was imported from abroad, more especially that which was imported in such large quantities from the Baltic. This timber could be grown in this country just as well as in the Baltic countries. The United Kingdom imported £26,000,000 worth of timber, and £20,000,000 of that total could be profitably grown in this country. It was a painful fact that foreign timber was preferred to home-grown timber, and that in many architects, specifications foreign timber was specified to be supplied. British timber had been rejected for telegraph poles, and this was entirely due to their own neglect of this subject. The evidence given before the Committee on afforestation showed that until within the last ten years or so owners of woodland did not understand that the size, shape, and quality of trees could be altered by anything they could do. They thought this was all a mere accident, whereas it had been shown by evidence to be due chiefly to good management.

In France, Germany, and Austria, systematised afforestation and education in forestry had improved the yield of timber, and had added greatly to the resources of those countries. The evidence that was given before the Committee on Afforestation unanimously favoured immediate and effective provision for bringing systematised instruction within the reach of foresters, agents, and woodmen. He was glad that the right hon. Gentleman himself was in full sympathy with the spirit of those recommendations. The Committee recommended the establishment of two large State forests, which should demonstrate the most technical and economical development of the art of forestry, and where proper accounts should be kept. The idea was that these State forests should be managed as commercial undertakings and be so worked as to yield an adequate financial return. The Committee suggested that example plots should be attached to universities, and university colleges in which instruction upon this subject should be given. With regard to Wales very valuable evidence was given before the Committee, and he trusted that some of the large water areas belonging to the great municipalities situated in the Principality would be used in future for demonstrations in forestry. He need hardly remind the House of the advantages of afforesting. It helped to fill up the labourers' year. It gave them work at a time of the year when work was most needed. Not only this, but it added to the natural beauty of the country and to its resources, and it would provide a new source of revenue and a new source of employment for the people. They had had a great deal of unproductive expenditure of late, but this would only mean a small amount of expenditure, and he need hardly urge the right hon. Gentleman to impress upon the Treasury the importance of this question and the fact that it would be reproductive expenditure. Such expenditure would pay for itself over and over again, and in the far distant future the people of this country would have reason to bless the name of the right hon Gentleman if he undertook this work, which he held to be of national importance. He begged to move the Motion standing in his name. Knowing, however, that the right hon. Gentleman was thoroughly in sympathy with the objects of his Motion he would afterwards ask the leave of the House to withdraw his Motion for the present, trusting that at some future time, when the evidence of the Committee had been published, they might have a further and better opportunity of discussing this extremely important question.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That it is expedient to give effect, as early as possible, to the recommendations of the Departmental Committee on Forestry."—(*Mr. J. H. Lewis.*)

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. HANBURY, Preston): The hon. Member will admit that I have taken considerable interest in this question, and I hope that the appointment of this Departmental Committee may produce some very useful results. This question of afforestation is important from more points of view than one. When we see how the timber supply of the rest of the world is gradually diminishing, and with the possibility before us of something like a timber famine in the not very far distant future, it behoves us to look more carefully than we have done in the past to our own timber supply. There is a good deal of land in the country which hardly brings in any agricultural return, and I think it very probable that much of that land might pay better under timber. In various parts of the country we hear about the water supply becoming very scarce, and it is quite possible that a greater growth of timber in this country might go some way to remedy even that defect. I cannot possibly go into the question at any length now. The Departmental Committee has evidently conducted its work with the greatest possible care, but the evidence has not yet been published, and the hon. Member has the advantage of me in that respect, so that he will not expect me to express now any definite opinion as to how far their recommendations should be given effect to. The recommendations will undoubtedly receive my very careful consideration, and, if supported by the evidence, I have no doubt they ought to receive the attention of the Government.

MR. J. H. LEWIS said that, in view of the reply of the right hon. Gentleman and the fact that the evidence of the Committee on Afforestation had not yet been published, he begged leave to withdraw his Motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

AFFORESTATION IN IRELAND.

MR. NOLAN (Louth, S.) said that when he gave notice of moving this Motion, he thought an opportunity would be afforded him of submitting this question to the judgment of the House. He thought those views were also entertained by hon. Members sitting on the Government side who represented Ireland, but he was sorry to find that they were not now sitting upon the Government Benches. It could not be said that this question of afforestation in Ireland was an unimportant one. All the writers upon this subject, and there had been many, were agreed that the question of afforestation in Ireland was one of the most important questions that could occupy the attention of any Statesman.

Notice taken that forty Members were not present; House counted, and forty Members not being present—

The House was adjourned at Eleven of the Clock till To-morrow.

Adjourned at Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 25th March, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS.

The Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of Ways and Means.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL (ELECTRIC SUPPLY) BILL.

Order [9th March] for Second Reading this day, read and discharged; Bill withdrawn.

WEST HAM CORPORATION BILL.

Order [2nd March] that the West Ham Corporation Bill be committed, read and discharged; Bill withdrawn.

CHARING CROSS, EUSTON, AND HAMPSTEAD RAILWAY BILL; GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

COVENTRY AND ARLEY RAILWAY BILL.

Reported [Preamble not proved]; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP A).

Sir HENRY AUBREY-FLETCHER reported from the Committee on Group A of Private Bills; That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Friday, at Eleven of the Clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

GRINDLEFORD, BASLOW, AND BAKEWELL RAILWAY BILL.

Petition for additional provision; referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP 1).

Mr. KIMBER reported from the Committee on Group 1 of Railway Bills; That the parties promoting the Great Eastern Railway (No. 1) Bill had stated that the evidence of Mr. Norman Scorgie was essential to their case; and, it having been proved that his attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House, he had been instructed to move that the said Norman Scorgie do attend the said Committee to-morrow, at half-past Eleven of the Clock.

Ordered, That Mr. Norman Scorgie do attend the Committee on Group 1 of Railway Bills to-morrow, at half-past Eleven of the Clock.

Bath Corporation Water Bill; reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

North Middlesex Gas Bill; reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table.

PETITIONS.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Petition from Birmingham, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour; From Canisbay; Creich; Rogart; and Annan; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Lanark, against; to lie upon the Table.

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

Petitions against: from Swansea; and Grantham; to lie upon the Table.

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.

Petition from Dunoon, against establishment; to lie upon the Table.

at the commencement and end of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Stamford; and Wood Green; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY IN LANCASHIRE.

Petition from Salford, for prohibition; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Reports and Papers relating to the Training of Teachers for the year 1901–2 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889 (ORDINANCE).

Copy presented, of University Court Ordinance No. VII. (Aberdeen No. 1) (Foundation of the Burnett-Fletcher Chair of History and Archæology in the University of Aberdeen) [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No 93.]

AMERICAN MAIL ERVICE.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 16th March; *Sir John Leng*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 94.]

LAND PURCHASE (IRELAND).

Return ordered, "of the Resolutions and Statement adopted by the Irish Landowners' Convention on the 10th day of October, 1902, and Report of the Irish Land Conference, dated the 3rd day of January, 1903, and Minute on the Land Conference Report adopted on the 7th day of January, 1903, by the Executive Committee of the Irish Landowners' Convention."—(*Mr. Wyndham.*)

Return presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 89.]

LAND PURCHASE ACTS.

Return ordered, "showing, as far as practicable, for each year (or other stated period) (1) the lowest and highest prices (in each calendar year) of Guaranteed Land Stock; and (2) the number and amount of loans under the Land Purchase Acts (as defined in Section 48 (1) of The Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1896), together with the total amount of the acreage purchased."—(*Mr. Wyndham.*)

Return presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 90.]

LAND LAW ACTS (IRELAND).

Return ordered, "showing, according to provinces and counties the number of cases in which judicial rents have been fixed by all the methods provided by the Land Law Acts for a first and a second Statutory term, respectively, to the 31st day of December, 1902, with particulars as to acreage, former rents of holdings, and percentages of reduction in rents."—(*Mr. Wyndham.*)

Return presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 91.]

LAND PURCHASE (IRELAND) ACTS.

Copy ordered, "of Report by Mr. W. F. Bailey, Legal Assistant Commissioner, of an inquiry into the present condition of tenant purchasers under the Land Purchase Acts."—(*Mr. Wyndham.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 92.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Visit of Training Vessel to Lochbroom, Ross-shire.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether arrangements can be made for a training vessel to visit Lochbroom, Ross-shire, this summer.

(*Answered by Mr. Arnold-Forster.*) The hon. Member's suggestion will be considered when the summer cruises of the training ships are being decided.

Royal Marines—Separation Allowance while Afloat.

MR. LOCKIE (Devonport): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he can arrange that a separation allowance, similar to that made to the Royal Marines detached from headquarters for duty, shall be paid directly to the wives of Royal Marines when serving afloat.

(*Answered by Mr. Arnold-Forster.*) As I informed the House on the 16th March,† the question will shortly arise of giving further advantages, either in respect of pay or allowances, to the Royal Marines, as the equivalent of the additional pay proposed for the Army, beyond the 2d. a day increase already granted; and all such subsidiary allowances as that referred to in the Question will then naturally receive consideration.

New Naval Regulations—Pay of Warrant Officers on Promotion.

MR. REGINALD LUCAS (Portsmouth): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what will be the scale of pay for warrant officers promoted to be lieutenants under the new scheme; whether they will receive pensions on a fixed scale, and, if not, what will be the basis for regulating them, and whether he can say when the first list of these promotions will be announced.

(*Answered by Mr. Arnold-Forster.*) An announcement will be made shortly as to the rates of pay and pension of these officers. The first promotions will be made at the beginning of the next financial year.

Bovine Tuberculosis Commission—Report.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he can say when the Report of the Commission on Bovine Tuberculosis will be issued.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) I am informed that it is impossible to state definitely at present when the Report referred to will be issued.

Ireland—Tenders for Drugs—British and American Manufactures.

SIR JOHN ROLLESTON (Leicester): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that in the forms of tender for drugs issued by the Boards of Guardians in Ireland the preparations of an American firm are specified, and will he explain why British drug houses manufacturing similar preparations are excluded from the list.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) I am not aware that the preparations of an American firm have been included in the list of medicines prescribed by the Local Government Board for Ireland. Perhaps my hon. friend will communicate to me particulars of the preparations in question.

Scotland—Removal of Sheriff's Court from Inverary to Dunoon.

MR. ORR-EWING (Ayr Burghs): To ask the Lord Advocate whether it has been decided to remove the Sheriff Court and the staff from Inverary to Dunoon; and, if so, whether the Court at Inverary can be retained for certain cases instead of being abolished altogether.

(*Answered by Mr. A. Graham Murray.*) The answer to the first part of the hon. Member's Question is in the affirmative, and the change will take place in the autumn. The arrangements as to the possible sittings for occasional business at Inverary will rest with the sheriff.

Persian Tariff on British Goods.

SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee): To ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether negotiations have taken place, and, if so, with what result, for the modification of the Persian tariff on British goods, in view of the tariff recently ratified between Russia and Persia.

(*Answered by Lord Cranborne.*) I would venture to draw the attention of the hon. Member to the answer which I returned to my hon. friend the Member for King's Lynn on 23rd February.‡ I am not yet in a position to give any further information.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxix., 872.

‡ See (4) *Debates*, cxviii., 496.

Raw Sugar—Average Prices.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): To ask the President of the Board of Trade what has been the average price of raw sugar in each month since November last, calculated on the same basis and the figures of prices for September and November, 1902, given in his speech of 24th November.†

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) The average price of 88 per cent. beet sugar f. o. b. Hamburg in recent months has been as follows: November, 1902, about 7s. 6d.; December, 1902, 8s.; January, 1903, 8s.; February, 8s.; March, 8s. 6d.

Education Act, 1902—Schedule 2 (ii.).

MR HENRY HOBHOUSE (Somersetshire, E.): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether his Board propose to exercise to any, and, if so, to what extent their powers under Schedule 2 (ii.) of the Education Act, 1902, of paying to School Boards before the appointed day Parliamentary Grants accrued before that day, but not in the ordinary course payable until after that day.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) The Board of Education do not anticipate that it will be necessary to exercise their powers under Schedule 2 (ii.) in respect of School Boards. Parliamentary Grants accruing during a school year do not mature for payment until after the termination of that year; and apportionment would only be required in the case of a closed school. Board schools will not be closed, but will be transferred on the appointed day to new authorities, who will carry them on without break in continuity. These authorities, as successors in regard to property, powers, rights, and liabilities, will be the proper persons to receive the grants accruing but not yet matured for payment at the appointed day.

Strabane Railway Station—Right of Way.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): To ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether his attention has been called to a series of prosecutions at the suit of the Crown against certain car drivers for riot at Strabane Railway Station on the 20th and 21st January last; and whether, seeing that these prosecutions arose out of the stopping of a public roadway by the Great Northern Railway Company at the station, and that previously proceedings had been instituted by the car privers against the porters of the Great Northern Railway Company, will he say at whose instance the Crown intervened.

(*Answered by Mr. Atkinson.*) According to the information received by the Crown through the police, the car drivers frequenting this railway station claimed a right to enter upon and traverse the premises of the company in order to reach the adjoining station of the Donegal Railway Company, and there solicit passengers arriving by train. The Great Northern Company deny the existence of any such right. On the occasions referred to, the car drivers and various other persons assembled at the station by arrangement, made a concerted, violent, and riotous attack upon the servants of the company, overwhelmed them, forced the doors of the station, took possession of the platform to the terror and alarm of the passengers, stabbed one of the railway servants, bit off part of the finger of another, threw a third from the platform on to the permanent way to his serious injury, and assaulted more or less seriously several others. Acting on this information, the Crown, of its own motion, and not at the instigation of anybody, instituted a prosecution for riot, as the assertion of civil rights, even if they existed, in such a manner was illegal and criminal, and could not be permitted with any regard to the preservation of the public peace. I am not aware that before the occurrence any proceedings such as are mentioned had been instituted.

Prosecutions for Sheep Scab.

MR. FIELD: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state how many prosecutions were instituted for sheep scab in Ireland during last year, the amount of fines imposed, and the localities in which the prosecutions were instituted.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxv., 262.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) There were 221 such prosecutions, resulting in 214 convictions; the total amount of fines imposed was £163 8s. The prosecutions were instituted in every part of Ireland, with the exception of the counties of Armagh, Donegal, Londonderry, Louth, Monaghan, Queen's County, Sligo, and the county boroughs of Belfast, Limerick, Londonderry, and Waterford.

Strabane Petty Sessions—Remarks of Resident Magistrate.

MR. O'DOHERTY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to the remarks addressed by Mr. Dunsterville, R.M., to the justices of the peace associated with him at the hearing of certain cases at a special court of petty sessions held at Strabane on the 27th February last; and will he state what action he intends to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The hon. Member has privately informed me that the date mentioned in the Question is a misprint for the 27th January. I have communicated with the Resident Magistrate, Mr. Dunsterville, who states there was no petty sessions or court of any kind at Strabane on that date. If the hon. Member intended to refer to the proceedings at these petty sessions on the 17th and 18th February, when a number of persons were charged with riot, I can only say that I have read what purports to be a verbatim report of these proceedings published in a local newspaper, and do not find that Mr. Dunsterville used language which could be held to reflect on his fellow magistrates. He assures me that he harboured no intention of the kind.

Local Government Inquiries in Ireland—Shorthand Writers—Remuneration.

MR. O'DOHERTY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state by whom are shorthand writers employed at Local Government Board inquiries, what remuneration is paid to shorthand writers thus employed, and the total amount of remuneration paid to shorthand writers in Ireland for the year 1902.

MR. O'DOHERTY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the statement made by Dr. Smith, Local Government Board Inspector, at the inquiry held last week, that he had no power or authority to employ a shorthand writer to take a note of the proceedings of said inquiry; and whether, seeing that inspectors have employed shorthand writers at similar inquiries, can he give any explanation for the statement made by Dr. Smith.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) There is no authority for the employment of, and no provision for remunerating, shorthand writers at inquiries held under the Poor Law Acts. The statement made by Dr. Smith was, therefore, according to the fact. The depositions at such an inquiry are invariably taken by the inspector conducting it. In the case of other inquiries, however, such as those held under the Public Health Acts, the Labourers' Acts, the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, the inspector holding the inquiry may employ a shorthand writer, the expense of whose employment is recoverable from the local authority. Shorthand writers employed at inquiries of this class are remunerated in accordance with a prescribed scale, namely, two guineas for each day's attendance exceeding three hours daily, and one guinea where the attendance is less than three hours a day. The transcription of the shorthand notes is also paid for at the rate of 6d. per folio of seventy-two words. The total amount paid to shorthand writers, including allowances for travelling and subsistence, in the year ended 31st December, 1902, was £2,160 9s. 8d.

Irish Board of Works—Money advanced for Planting.

MR. CONDON (Tipperary, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state how much money have the Board of Works advanced for planting; under what authority was this advance given; what rate of interest is charged; and what period is given for repayment.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The Board is empowered by the Act 29 and 30 Vic. c. 40, s. 5 (one of the Landed Property Improvement Acts), to make loans for planting for shelter. It has power to lend for planting generally under the combined operation of the 31st Section of the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881, and the 20th Section of 46 and 47 Vic. c. 43. Loans amounting to £32,005 have been made for planting for shelter. The amount advanced for planting irrespectively of shelter cannot be definitely stated, inasmuch as the loans are combined with the other numerous loans made under the Act of 1881. The planting loans, however, are few and small, and are believed not to amount to more than £2,000. The period for repayment of loans for shelter under the 29 and 30 Vic. c. 40, is usually thirty-five years. The period in the case of loans for planting generally under the Act of 1881 is twenty-two years. The difference in the two cases arises from the fact that the tenure of the borrower under the former Act was longer and offers a more lasting security than the tenure of the borrower under the Act of 1881. In both cases repayment is made by a rent-charge amounting to £5 per cent. on the sum advanced in the case of thirty-five years' loans, and £6 10s. per cent. in that of twenty-two years' loans. The rent-charge of £5 per cent. includes interest at £3 10s. per cent. That of £6 10s. per cent. includes interest at £3 8s. 3d. per cent.

Royal Commission on Militia and Volunteers.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he is yet in a position to state the names of the members of the Royal Commission to inquire into the conditions of service of the officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the Militia and Volunteer forces; the reasons for the present shortage, and how a great number of officers and recruits may be attracted thereto; the terms of reference; and when the Commission will enter upon its labours.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) I am not yet in a position to give my right hon. and gallant friend the information for which he asks.

Ashton-under-Lyne Barracks—Cost of Construction and Repairs.

MR. HERBERT WHITELEY (Ashton-under-Lyne): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state the original cost of the Ashton-under-Lyne Barracks; the amount spent in alterations, additions, and repairs to them during the last ten years; and the number of men recruited in the Ashton-under-Lyne district during the same period.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) The original cost of the barracks at Ashton-under-Lyne was £45,077; the amount spent on subsequent alterations, additions, and maintenance in the last ten years was £5,754. The average take of recruits for the last ten years in the 63rd Regimental District, of which Ashton-under-Lyne is the headquarters, for the Regular Forces and Militia amounted to 1,373 and 1,973 respectively, but these figures include 1,151 and 1,645, respectively, raised in the Manchester recruiting district.

Army Clothing Contracts—Fair Wages.

MR. GOULDING (Wiltshire, Devizes): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will give the highest and lowest prices paid to contractors for making Royal Artillery tunics since 31st December, 1901; whether his Department has any knowledge of the wages paid by the contractors to their workpeople; whether he is aware that a firm of Government contractors recently offered their hands 2s. 4d. for making overcoats; and whether, seeing that this is below the Pimlico standard of wages, he proposes to take any steps in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) In reply to the first part of the Question, all contract prices are strictly confidential.

As regards the second part, any case, where the War Department has reason to believe that the contract conditions as to payment of current wages are being broken, is fully investigated. As regards the third part of the Question, the reply is in the negative. As regards the last part of the Question, prices are not ruled by the wages paid at Pimlico, but by the House of Commons Resolution of 1891.

Somaliland—Press Censorship.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether a military censorship exists in Somaliland in regard to all Press communications to this country; and, if so, whether this is in order to prevent the Mad Mullah from learning what are the movements of His Majesty's forces.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) A censorship has been established in Somaliland under the usual conditions, the object being to check the dissemination of incorrect reports as to the operations now being carried on.

Postal Service—Compulsory Retirement.

Mr. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow W.): To ask the Postmaster-General if he will state what practice is followed in enforcing retirement from the postal service at sixty years of age; and whether in any offices discretionary power is exercised in extending the period of service.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) The rule is that all pensionable officers of whatever grade whose conduct, capacity, and efficiency fall below a fair standard shall be called upon to retire at sixty; but retirement at sixty is not enforced in the case of officers whose conduct is good, and who are certified by their superior officers to be thoroughly efficient.

Postal Servants' Deputation at Birmingham.

Mr. JAMES O'CONNOR: To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that the surveyor postmaster of Birmingham recently refused to meet a deputation of postmen on the ground that it included two men from one office, and insisted on the withdrawal of one of these men and the substitution of a man either from Handsworth or Smethwick; and, seeing that the men chosen had been duly elected at a meeting at which both offices were represented, will he state whether this action on the part of the Birmingham postmaster is in accordance with the rules of the Department.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) I am not yet in possession of all the facts in this case. When I have ascertained and considered them I will communicate with the hon. Member.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Tower of London—Armour Collection.

Mr. STUART SAMUEL (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if it is proposed to remove the collection of armour from the Tower of London; and, if so, whether he will make arrangements to leave a portion of the collection in the Tower for the advantage of the visitors to that building.

The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford): No, Sir; it is not proposed to remove the collection of armour from the Tower of London. The responsibility, however, for the care and custody of the arms and armour at the Tower shortly will be transferred to the trustees of the British Museum.

Royal Engineers and Barrack Construction—Report of Committee.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE (Bristol, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether any decision has been come to upon the Report of the Committee upon the employment of Royal Engineers on the construction of barracks; and whether the Report will be published.

Mr. BRODRICK: The various recommendations of this Committee are now under discussion. I have not decided to publish the Report.

Army Advisory Board.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state for what length of time do the appointments of officers of the Auxiliary Forces on the Advisory Board hold good.

MR. BRODRICK: The tenure of these appointments has not yet been fixed.

Seamen and Bad Teeth.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty will he state the number of recruits for the Navy who were rejected in 1902 on account of bad teeth.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER, Belfast, W.): The statistics in the possession of the Admiralty do not enable me to give exact figures on this particular point, but it is estimated that at least one recruit in every ten is rejected on account of bad teeth.

Foreign Naval Expenditure.

SIR EDGAR VINCENT (Exeter): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he can state the naval expenditure during the last five years of France, Germany, Russia, the United States, and of the British Empire.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: The figures asked for will be found in the Parliamentary Return entitled "Naval Expenditure and Mercantile Marine," which is published annually on the Motion of the hon. and gallant Member for Yarmouth.

Brown Institute—Vivisection School.

MR WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in view of the fact that the Brown Institute was founded in 1871 by means of a bequest of £20,000 for the establishment of a hospital for animals, will he ascertain under what authority a School of Vivisection is now conducted at the Institute; and will he state how many persons who are attached to this school possess vivisection certificates, and the nature of such certificates.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. AKERS DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): In 1877 the University of London, which is the governing body of the Brown Institute, applied to have the place registered under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1876, for the performance therein of experiments on living animals. The place was registered accordingly. Sixteen persons hold licences under that Act authorising them to perform experiments at the Institute. Fifteen of these also hold certificates under the Act—viz., eleven authorising practically painless experiments such as inoculations to be performed without anæsthetics, coupled in five cases with the extra certificate required for experiments on dogs or cats; and fifteen certificates authorising the animal to be kept alive after an initial operation under anæsthetics, coupled in nine cases with the extra certificate for dogs or cats, and in one case for horses.

The Riots in Trinidad.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): May I ask the Colonial Secretary if he has any information to give to the House with regard to the rioting in Trinidad?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): I am sorry to say very serious rioting has taken place in Trinidad. The following telegram was received at the Colonial Office at eight o'clock this morning from Governor C. A. Moloney—

> "Considerable excitement has been caused during the last few weeks by the introduction in the Legislative Council of a new Water Works Ordinance, the provisions of which have been much misrepresented. This has been increased by several public meetings, called together by those who demand representative government, and the whole excitement was turned in that direction. At the meeting of the Legislative Council on the 16th, a crowd entered the Council Chamber in such numbers that the Bill could not be proceeded with, and the Council adjourned. It was decided, therefore, that admission to the adjourned meeting should be by ticket only, as many tickets being issued as there was accommodation for. A public meeting was held on the 21st to protest against this, and the speakers at the meeting urged those assembled to refuse tickets, and to insist upon their supposed right to be present

at all the meetings of the Legislative Council. Accordingly at eleven o'clock the committee of the Ratepayers' Association presented themselves at the entrance of the Council Chamber, and, refusing tickets, demanded entrance. At the time there was a crowd round the door of about 1,000 persons. A large force of police were guarding the buildings. The Council proceeded with its business, though much interrupted by shoutings outside, until a quarter to two p.m., when stone-throwing into the Council room commenced with great violence. This continued for about three-quarters of an hour, completely wrecking everything exposed and sweeping the Council room from side to side, wounding many present. At 2.30 the public building known as the Red House was fired in two places. The Riot Act was read twice from the galleries on each side of the building and the police were ordered to fire. The mob was rapidly dispersed. About this time a large force was landed from His Majesty's ship 'Pallas,' and a contingent of the local force arrived on the scene. All efforts failed to save the Red House, which was completely destroyed with all the records except those in the Registrar-General's vault. The casualties from the firing are nine killed and forty wounded. The police barracks caught fire at the top of the tower, the entrance to which was burnt out, but the fire was otherwise prevented from spreading; 200 Lancashire Fusiliers are on the way from Barbados. Request immediate Commission of inquiry."

In reference to this last sentence, I think the matter is so serious that an inquiry is necessary, and I propose to appoint it at once.

Treaty between United States and Cuba.

MR. CHARLES McARTHUR (Liverpool, Exchange): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether an answer has been received to the representations made by His Majesty's Government at Washington with respect to the proposed reciprocity treaty between Cuba and the United States; and whether he has any information which he can give to the House on the subject.

*THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord CRANBORNE, Rochester): Yes, Sir; the answer was to the effect that the conclusion of the treaty was based on the prerogative of independent nations to enter into such compacts for their mutual benefit.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Is it a fact that the treaty has been ratified by the United States Senate?

*LORD CRANBORNE: Subject, I understand, to an Amendment requiring the approval of the House of Representatives to the Convention before it becomes operative.

British Merchants Losses in the French Congo.

MR. CHARLES McARTHUR: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether an answer has been received by His Majesty's Government to the proposals made to the French Government with respect to the claims of British merchants for restitution and compensation for losses arising out of the action of the Concessionaire Companies in the French Congo; and whether he can state what is the present position of the negotiations on this subject.

*LORD CRANBORNE: Negotiations with the French Government are still proceeding, but in their present stage it would not be advisable to make any public announcement in regard to them.

Native Labour in the African Mines.

MR. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in making arrangements for the recruiting of labourers for the South African mines from British Central Africa, His Majesty's Government have laid down such regulations or obtained such guarantees as will make it impossible for these labourers being obtained from the Congo Free State, or through the action of any of the officials of that State or the chiefs within its jurisdiction.

*LORD CRANBORNE: I hope to lay the regulations in question upon the Table in the course of the next few days. It will be seen that they apply to all native labourers engaged for service within the Protectorate, from whatever part of Africa they may be drawn. Whether further rules are required in the case mentioned by the hon. Gentleman will receive careful consideration.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, N.R., Cleveland): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign

Affairs whether the Foreign Office intends to authorise the recruiting of native labourers for the Transvaal mines in the Protectorate of British East Africa and Uganda, as well as in British Central Africa.

*LORD CRANBORNE: Pending the result of the experiment of permitting 1,000 natives to be recruited in British Central Africa for South Africa, His Majesty's Government do not, as at present advised, intend to authorise recruiting for a similar purpose in the Protectorates of British East Africa or Uganda.

MR. WHITLEY (Halifax): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can state who will fix the rate of wages to be paid to the 1,000 natives to be recruited in Central Africa for the Transvaal mines.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The rate of wages will be fixed by agreement between the Native Labour Association and the labourers employed, subject to the approval of the Commissioner of the Protectorate.

Vaccination.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, in considering any further legislation in regard to vaccination, arrangements will be made such as will enable a parent, when registering the birth of a child, to obtain a certificate of exemption, by making a declaration to the effect that he conscientiously believes vaccination to be prejudicial to the health of the child.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. WALTER LONG, Bristol, S.): The Prime Minister intimated in reply to a Question a few weeks ago that, except for the renewal of the existing Vaccination Act, it was not intended to propose legislation on the subject of vaccination during the present session.† In these circumstances, perhaps the hon. Member will excuse me if I do not go into matters such as that raised in the Question at the present time.

Fisheries Board Bill.

MR. DOUGHTY (Great Grimsby): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture if he can say when the Bill for the creation of a Fisheries Board, under the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, will be introduced.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. HANBURY, Preston): I hope to introduce the Bill referred to before Easter.

Prevention of Accidents to Railway Servants.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will state the steps taken by his Department to carry out The Railway Employment (Prevention of Accidents) Act, 1900, particularly in respect of the making of rules under Section 1, the inspection of railways under Section 13, and the making of inquiries and experiments under Section 15.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): 1. Under the Act in question rules have been made by the Board of Trade dealing with the following matters. The labelling of wagons; the movement of wagons by propping and tow-roping; the provision of power brakes on engines; the lighting of stations or sidings where shunting operations are frequently carried on after dark; the protection of point-rods and signal wires and the position of ground levers working points; the protection of gauge glasses; the arrangement of tool boxes and water gauges on engines; the provision of brake-vans or other suitable vehicles for trains working upon running lines beyond station limits the protection of men engaged in relaying or repairing permanent way. All these rules came into operation as Statutory Rules on the 8th August last. The amended rule has also been prepared respecting the provision of either-side brake-levers, such rule being drawn on lines indicated by the Court of the Railway and Canal Commission when the subject was before them last year. The period within which objectors may require the reference of this rule before it is finally made to the Railway and Canal Commissioners will expire on the 20th April. (2.) Local inquiries into the conditions of working on various railways were held in the course of framing these rules, and since August last inspection has been made by the Board's officers of forty-six stations and yards which were represented to the Board as being inadequately lighted, in contravention of the rule on that subject. I am glad to say that all the improvements in lighting which were regarded by the Board's officers as essential in these cases have been or are being carried out by the railway companies concerned. (3.) The Board have not yet considered it necessary to make experiments under Section 15 of the Act, and the position in this matter is still that explained in my answer to the hon. Member on the 12th May last.†

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxviii., 1364

Railway Couplings.

Mr. CHANNING: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether any, and, if so, what steps have been taken to carry out the provisions of The Prevention of Accidents Act, 1900, in respect of couplings which will remove the necessity of men going between the carriages or trucks in coupling and uncoupling.

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: I presume the hon. Member's reference to the provisions of the Act in question is directed to Section 15, under which the Board of Trade are empowered to make experiments. This power has not hitherto been exercised by the Board, but several railway companies are conducting experiments as to improved appliances, including couplings designed for the purpose mentioned by the hon. Member, and trials have in many cases been attended and watched by officers of the Board of Trade.

Mr. CHANNING: I propose to draw the attention of the House to this matter at the earliest opportunity.

Pay of Postal Servants.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether his attention has been drawn to the remarks made by Mr. Justice Phillimore, when directing the grand jury at the opening of the Glamorgan assizes, in which he animadverted on the low wages paid to five Post Office employees who have since been sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, and expressed the hope that the Post Office authorities would consider this state of things; and whether he proposes taking any action in the matter.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Worcestershire, E.): Of the five persons referred to by the hon. Member, only two were in the direct employment of the Department; the remaining three were employed by sub-postmasters who receive inclusive emoluments to cover the whole cost of maintaining their offices, and make their own arrangements to provide themselves with assistance. In one of these cases the assistant was a voluntary learner without pay, as she wished to acquire a knowledge of Post Office work with a view to subsequently securing an appointment. In another of the cases the assistant was the sub-postmaster's son. The third was a girl who is stated to have received 5s. a week. Of the two persons who were servants of the Post Office, one was in receipt of 31s. a week for wages and stripe allowance, exclusive of uniform and boot allowance. The other was a youth who was receiving 22s. a week. I do not consider that the rate of remuneration can be properly described as low in either of these cases; and I see that the learned judge, in passing sentence, concurred in this view and stated that his former remarks had been misunderstood.

Vaccination Lymph in Scotland.

Mr. WEIR: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if he will state from whom the public vaccinators in Scotland obtain their supply of animal lymph.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. A. Graham Murray, Buteshire): There are no public vaccinators in Scotland, as the term is understood in England. Parochial vaccinators, whose duties are confined to vaccinating defaulters and the children of paupers, receive free, on application, supplies of glycerinated calf lymph from the Local Government Board for Scotland.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cvii., 1356.

Holdings in the Crofting Counties—Purchase of Land.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the Congested Districts Board have under consideration any further purchases of land for the creation of new holdings in either of the six crofting counties; and, if so, will he indicate the counties and the amount which it is proposed to expend.

MR. A GRAHAM MURRAY: There are not at present any proposals before the Board in such a position that any public information can be given in reply to the question of the hon. Member. Information to the fullest extent possible will be given in the annual report of the Congested Districts Board.

Penalties for Illegal Trawling.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if the Secretary for Scotland will consider the expediency of introducing legislation at an early date to render the penalties for illegal trawling of a more deterrent nature than at present.

MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: The Secretary for Scotland does not at present contemplate legislation on the lines suggested by the hon. Member, but he will be glad to give fair consideration to any Bill which the hon. Member will himself suggest.

Scottish Licensing Law.

MR. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the expression excisable liquors, sometimes occurring in the Licensing Acts Consolidation (Scotland) Bill in place of intoxicating liquors in the consolidated Acts, is exactly equivalent to the latter; and will he explain why in Clause 52 intoxicating is retained, while in Clause 53 it is altered to excisable.

MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: The expression "excisable liquors" occurs throughout all the Scottish Licensing Acts which have been consolidated, and accordingly will be found in the corresponding sections of the Consolidation Bill. The only sections of the Bill where the expression "intoxicating liquors" is used contain provisions which were either in Acts originally confined to England but subsequently extended to Scotland, or in a public general Act such as the Intoxicating Liquors (Sale to Children) Act, 1901. While the two expressions are practically synonymous it has been thought advisable not to change the original phraseology. The discrepancy referred to in the last paragraph of the hon. Member's Question is due to a drafting error and will be corrected.

Newport (Mon.) Education Scheme.

MR. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Board of Education if he is aware that the amended scheme under the new Act submitted by the Newport Borough County Council to his Department was only adopted by the casting vote of the mayor, and in the face of strong protest; if his attention has been drawn to a communication signed by an absolute majority of the whole of the members of the Council stating that the scheme does not represent their views, and asking the Board of Education to withhold its sanction to the scheme pending its reconsideration at the next Council meeting; and whether, under the circumstances, the Board will withhold its approval.

*THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Sir WILLIAM ANSON, Oxford University): I am aware that there is considerable difference of opinion in the Newport Town Council on the subject of the scheme submitted to the Board of Education. The Board have sanctioned the publication of the Draft Scheme in order to obtain the views of the Newport inhabitants more effectively than would otherwise be possible. Publication must precede the approval of the Board. Such approval is not given until the various appeals (if any) against a scheme have been fully considered. Any representations made by the Council in regard to the scheme at their next ordinary meeting will certainly be carefully considered by the Board before approval or disapproval of the scheme is signified.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): Will the right hon. Gentleman state the business for next week.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.) Army and Navy Votes will be taken on Thursday and Monday, beginning with Army Votes 9, 15, and 16, and Navy Votes 14, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. On Tuesday the President of the Board of Agriculture will introduce the Bill of which notice has been given.

NEW BILL.

WOMEN'S DISABILITIES (REMOVAL) BILL.

"To amend the franchise by the Removal of Women's Disabilities," presented by Colonel Denny; to be read a second time upon Wednesday 20th May, and to be printed. [Bill 120.]

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; to be read the third time to-morrow.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

Edward Mitchell, esquire, for the County of Fermanagh (North Fermanagh Division).

IRISH LAND BILL.

***THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND** (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): Any Minister who asks leave from this House to introduce an Irish Land Bill must claim a special measure of indulgence, and I throw myself on the indulgence of the House. The subject is technical to a degree almost beyond belief; and there is this further difficulty, that I am in this chamber attempting to address two audiences at the same time—one a comparatively small audience who are versed in all the technicalities of the subject, who have discussed them by speech and in the Press at intervals for years, and I might almost say *de die in diem* during the last few months; and the other a comparatively large audience who, in view of the nature of the technicalities, have given them a very wide berth; and yet, in our deliberate opinion, both audiences are, if not equally, still both deeply interested in any prospect of a possible solution of the land question in Ireland. The general interest has, unless rumour has misled me, been focussed latterly — perhaps unduly — upon one point in any possible solution. Now, if I am to retain the attention of those who are now present, the last thing I desire is that as each proposition is explained they should be balancing in their minds whether the proposition should be viewed in one light or the other. The point upon which interest is, perhaps unduly, focussed is whether the Government think it possible to deal successfully with the situation by the use of credit alone, or whether the Government hold that, in addition to the credit operation, there must also be some cash aid. Well, Sir, the Government think that cash aid is necessary. They think it essential or they would not embody it in the Bill; but they think it subsidiary, and they attach more importance to the credit than to the cash operation. I have said this at the outset in order that the minds of those who listen to me may not stray away along the path of speculation. All I say must be viewed in the light of the statement that both operations will be employed. I wish, so far as it may be possible, to explain the proposals of the Government rather than to argue in their favour; and still less is it my desire to argue against possible alternatives. I wish very briefly to touch on the nature of the problem; then, briefly also, to gauge its extent; and, in the third place, I shall seek to delineate its shape and the broad features of any solution to be proposed. If I pass hastily over the nature of the problem and come promptly to our proposals, I would remind hon. Members that I may be excused for taking that course in view of the fact that last year I introduced a measure of a far less comprehensive character—it was just a year ago, Lady Day last year—when I did go at great length and in detail into the many reasons which at that time led the Government to hold that some drastic reform in land legislation for Ireland was imperative. Let me say now that those reasons have increased, that they have been aggravated, and that the load of litigation to which I then referred presses more heavily than it then did on the prospects of the main industry of Ireland.

Coming then, very briefly, to the nature of the problem, I may be asked at the outset why exceptional agrarian legislation is necessary for Ireland. I may be told that land in England is bought and hired in a free market. That is true, and where that is possible it is eminently desirable. But in Ireland it is impossible; and not only because of the natural state of the case is it not possible, but because it has been prohibited by enactment after enactment passed in this House.

There is a great distinction. Why is this thing so impossible in Ireland when it is possible in England? I will advance only two reasons. I could advance a good many if there were time. My first is an historical reason. In England our forms of land tenure are complicated, no doubt, though not nearly so complicated as in Ireland. There have been modifications of feudal services and so forth; but still it may be said that they have come down to us without any marked solution of continuity for a period of over 800 years. They depend on statutory enactments, but they are consecrated by usage which goes back beyond man's memory, or, at any rate beyond any popular memory of internecine strife. I need not elaborate the contrast. It is notorious that the case historically has been widely different in Ireland. I will only give one other reason—an economic reason —coming down to the present day. In England, I might add in Scotland, if this or that landlord or tenant unfortunately fails in the pursuit of agriculture, if agriculture as an industry is depressed throughout a whole countryside, there are avenues at hand—too enticing, some think, for the best welfare of the country—leading straight to great centres of industry or commerce. Freedom of trade and free contract in industry and commerce have reacted beneficently upon land transactions in England and in Scotland; but in Ireland that is not the case. These alternatives do not exist for all classes in Ireland, where, for the landlord as well as for the tenant, failure in agriculture means exile beyond the sea. If these distinctions exist—I do not wish to elaborate them further—they go far to explain, and if they go far to explain, they go far to justify, differential treatment of agrarian problems in Ireland. If the prosperity of agriculture in Ireland shrinks, it induces stresses and contractions throughout every layer of society, so that, as in geological formations, there is a tendency towards disruption and catastrophe. I have always held the view, and I hold it now, that if any illegality ensues it is the duty of any Government to make those guilty of illegalities amenable to the law. I have never hesitated to express that view or to give effect to it when, to my regret, the occasion seemed to demand it. But may we not, ought we not, to consider the possibility of alleviating these social stresses? And if we ought to do so, if that be a duty, is it not an obligation more easy of performance at a moment when unexampled events have been happening in Ireland, at a moment when testimony reaches us of a general desire, throughout all classes, all creeds, and all parties—throughout the whole community of Ireland—that some lasting basis of agrarian peace shall be found?

I have seen a suggestion which perhaps I ought to scout, and which I do scout, that this unanimity in Ireland is in part simulated; that it covers some indirect approach towards treating constitutional problems on more favourable terms. I am a Unionist, I am a member of a Unionist Government, and I believe that Ireland will always be bound by close constitutional ties to this country. But I would put it hypothetically as high as this. If Ireland, within the political limits of the Empire, occupied a constitutional position analogous to that of Canada, or, to take a more fantastic and more monstrous supposition, if the whole history of the last thousand years had been other than that which it has been, and Ireland, outside the political limits of the Empire, occupied a constitutional position, let us say, analogous to that of Egypt, I should still affirm that, in view of the geographical position of Ireland, it was to the material interest of this country that the main industry of such a neighbour should be prosperous and secure instead of, as now, precarious and decadent. Yes, Sir, I take it that that proposition, which would be true under these hypothetical circumstances, is more true under the conditions which exist, and is, above all, true at a time when the minds of thoughtful men are turning towards the problem of our food supply in the time of war.

Even if that be admitted in part, even if it be true that under the Union it is right that agriculture should be secured in Ireland, I may be asked how we hope to find a remedy by instituting another Land Act. I think there are forty or forty-two on the Statute-book. I admit that the number does tend to discredit in advance any renewed attempt at legislation. But if hon. Members will examine these Acts they will find that they fall into two categories—into a set of Acts dealing with the relations between landlords and tenants and a set of Acts which abolish those relations by enabling the tenant to become the owner of his holding. I do not wish to criticise the Act of 1881; but the House will find that the first set of Acts has failed of anything approaching to complete success, and that the second set of Acts, in so far as they have been applied to Ireland, have been invariably successful. Under the first set of Acts—and I think that I must make this plain to Members sitting for British constituencies who are, perhaps, not familiar with the subject—any Irish landlord or tenant may once in fifteen years apply to have the rent fixed by judicial process. It follows that these two questions, which are peculiarly unsuited to determination by process of law, namely, the amount due to the landlord by virtue of his ownership in the soil and the amount due to the tenant by virtue of his enterprise and improvements—have become in Ireland the subject of perpetual and universal litigation. The landlord puts no capital into the land; I do not think that he could be expected to do so. The tenant is tempted—we are all human —to "run out" his holding during the last three or four years of this period of fifteen years. The land is starved of capital, and it is starved of industry. I was talking not so long ago with a gentleman farmer, a class which Ireland would do well to keep and cherish, who said to me—

> "Perhaps I am the only man in Ireland who does not care, Mr. Wyndham, what provisions you put into your Bill."

At the first blush that might be taken as a compliment to me, as a plenary vote of confidence in myself. It was not. What he said threw a light on the situation. He said—

> "I happen to own 400 acres, but I have no control over them, and I take no interest in them. I happen to be the tenant of precisely the same area, 400 acres, and I take the greatest interest in the holding, making a clear profit of so much a year. A man next to me has bought, and where he is paying £1 an acre now I would willingly pay £3 an acre." "Why?" I asked. He answered, "Because he has treated the land with basic slag?" I said, "Why do you not treat your land with basic slag?" He replied, "I have every confidence in the Land Commission, but I am not such a fool as to put twenty or thirty tons of basic slag on the land if it is going to be subjected in a few years to examination by the Sub-Commissioners."

The landlords of Ireland are being ruined financially; the tenants are being ruined morally. Agriculture is starved of capital and industry. The taxpayers of this country are paying £140,000 a year for the Land Commission and £1,400,000 for the cost of the police, who are chiefly, and in many districts exclusively, engaged in dealing with illegalities born of agrarian unrest. Is it, then, so miraculous as we are asked to believe that Irish landlords and tenants should have come together and agreed to bury all ancient feuds, and that they should have come forward, with the whole community of Ireland behind them, saying, "We are prepared to do what we conceive to be our part of the contract in order to get peace if the State will give us the necessary facilities?" I do not think we need search for recondite reasons or subterranean alliances to explain so normal and so inevitable a fact as that.

Under the second set of Acts, which may be called the Purchase Acts, there has been uniform success. The State lends its credit to enable the tenant to become the owner of his holding. Nearly 80,000 tenants have bought. 73,000 have actually completed their purchases, and 6,000 applications are in the course of being dealt with. Nearly 80,000 have bought, and the State has not lost a penny. Indeed, the State cannot lose. The advance is secured in the first place cent. per cent. for the whole amount upon the value of the holding. The purchase having taken place, the purchaser does his best, instead of his worst, by the land. If he fail through either idleness or incompetence he is not an object of sympathy to his neighbours. Public opinion supports the punctual repayment of purchase instalments, and that is a moral security which we ought not to underestimate. But added to that moral security there is a further material security, in addition to the cent. per cent. security of the value of the land, which I will ask leave to explain. The Exchequer common to the two countries makes considerable grants in Ireland, as in England, each year for local purposes. An absolute guarantee can be obtained by providing that the total amount of repayments of instalments in any one year from any one county shall not exceed the limit which the Exchequer considers safe and which coincides with the amount of the Exchequer grants applicable in any one year to that county. I do not know whether I have made myself plain; but it means that, in addition to the security of the land, there is the security from Exchequer contributions which you can keep in your own pocket, and I know nothing safer than that. Land purchase in Ireland is a safe credit operation, it is also a sound investment. It is a sound investment, because as the area purchased increases the costs of the Land Courts and police decrease. By purchase the State stands to win—financially in consequence of these reductions, politically by destroying the material of despondency and discontent. At this moment an overwhelming majority of Irish landlords and Irish tenants desire that the system shall be universal.

If that be the nature of the problem, what is its size? I can only form an estimate. We have been asked to get at the money size of this problem. I have had the advantage of studying the statistics of the judicial rents fixed by the Land Commission; I have studied the statistics of the new Department of Agriculture; I have studied statistics given me by the Commissioner of Valuation and Survey; and I have studied the statistics of the last census. And I think that out of these—it is not quite easy to reconcile them—we shall get the truest guidance from the statistics of the last census, which deal with the number of agricultural holdings in Ireland and with their valuation. For this purpose it does not matter whether the boundaries of the particular farm, or two farms, held by a man coincide with the boundaries of those holdings which are assessed for the rates. We want to get at the money size of this problem. The valuation originally made by Griffiths—the Griffiths valuation, as it is called—has been carefully brought up to date year by year in the Department of Valuation; and since the Local Government Act for Ireland was passed, placing the rates upon the holders, they have been, I need hardly assure the House, very eager to see that no mistakes occurred. For five years they have been giving the necessary information to the Valuation Department in order that these returns should be correct. Another point which must be understood is that second-term rents in Ireland—that is to say, rents that have been twice revised—tend not only to go down to, but to go below, the valuation; so that we have the money size of the problem if we draw it on the basis of second-term rents. This is very technical, but I think it will stand examination. Now, there are 490,301 holdings given in these returns; but of that number more than half, more than 56 per cent., are valued at £10 or under, and more than two-thirds, more than 69 per cent., of these holdings are valued at £15 or under. You may take these 490,000 holdings at a sort of average of £10, and from them you must make these deductions. You must deduct, in the first place, between 70,000 and 80,000 tenants who have bought. You must deduct, in the second place, a number of small town plots, accommodation plots, and market-gardens, which are urban and not rural at all. You must deduct a great deal for large grass farms, on what are called English managed estates, and which, in my opinion, in all probability will never be sold, and farms which go beyond the limit of £3,000, which is the outside limit of what we are prepared to advance under this Act, as it was under previous Acts. If you make these deductions, I think it is a safe estimate to say that the money size of this problem is £4,000,000 worth of second-term rents in any one year. That is an elliptical argument, it is a speculative argument, and I am afraid it is an argument that cannot very readily be followed. I give it to show that we have done our best to gauge the money size of the problem.

Let me pass from the size of the problem to its shape. Partly because of the historic and economic causes to which I referred in the beginning of my speech, we find embarrassing features in the present system of land tenure. There are many paramount interests which claim attention. When I first undertook this task I was disposed to brush all these difficulties upon one side, and to believe that they were largely the figments of a legal brain. But it is not so. They are there, and they have to be dealt with. In Ireland large grants of land were made—a county, or more than two counties, to a public institution, or to the general of an Army. There have been subdivisions, and in smaller sizes this land has been granted out again; and so on, until there are two and three, and in some cases even four, of these superior interests, first charges on the produce of the land, before you get to the person whom we call the landlord, and who, we hope, will sell under this Act. But how can he do it under the existing Acts if he is to redeem all these first charges? That redemption, apart from the amount of money which it involves, is a very costly legal process, so he is arrested. Many landlords with these paramount interests above them, even if they wish to sell, cannot sell without walking into the workhouse. Well, although these paramount interests are first charges on the land, and are secure, and must be redeemed at the proper figure, the landlord, as we call him, beneath them, has sometimes become a caretaker, kept there because the owners of the paramount interests do not care to set up machinery for managing land which they have not at their disposal. Although the landlords are kept in that position, still, year by year, a number of these landlords surrender to the owners of these superior interests. Nor is that the end of all these embarrassments and complications. Between the person whom we call the landlord and the occupier of the soil you have one or two intervening. We want to get at the occupier of the soil to enable him to purchase an economic holding upon which a man and his family can maintain themselves. Well, it is difficult in the worst parts of Ireland. Perhaps I ought not to dwell on the worst parts of Ireland; but in the worst part of Ireland there is a state of affairs which no hon. Member who has not been there could conceive for a moment to be possible. Last autumn I was in the uttermost parts of the West. The whole countryside had been granted by a charter of King Charles I. to some great family which has died out, and it had passed, I suppose, during the prosperous years of last century to some shopkeeper who had made money. But the present landlord is in the workhouse, maintained there for eleven months of the year by the rates paid by his tenants. He was bankrupt, and the tenants were living in conditions which you would not find amongst the Kaffirs in South Africa. We have felt that it is our duty, if we can, to remedy this state of affairs. That estate has been in the Bankruptcy Court for thirty years; we hold that it ought to come out of the Bankruptcy Court. We ought to begin to build up the agrarian situation in Ireland from the bottom. Some system of village communities seems in the West of Ireland to have decayed, and at some stage in this decay to have become fossilized. So, if it were not a contradiction in terms, you might say it was at once rotten and rigid. And these are the two classes whom we have doomed to perpetual litigation. The shape of this problem—I pass from that—has impressed itself deeply upon the Conference Report.

It is not possible to go the whole length, or anything like the whole length, of the recommendations in that Report.

We make the following proposals. Whilst withdrawing no rights that at present exist, whilst allowing individual bargains, subject to minute, costly, and prolonged inspection, to go on, if it so pleases the persons in particular cases, we contemplate and we provide that purchase in the future shall, in the vast majority of cases, proceed by the sale of estates. We draw a distinction between estates presenting the problem of congestion in an acute form and ordinary estates. I will revert to the problem of congestion — it is a separate matter—later on. I wish now to explain the general policy of the Bill, applicable, as we believe, to some five-sixths of Ireland. In view of a strong recommendation of the Conference Report, and recommendations which have also reached me from many independent and authoritative sources, we provide that a landlord may make his own arrangements with his tenants if these arrangements fall within the limits of the policy in this Bill. They may, if I may so put it, make a comprehensive arrangement and show it up for sanction. This does not obviate the necessity of appointing Estates Commissioners to supervise such a transaction and to conclude it. These officers will be appointed. Their functions will not be judicial, they will be administrative. Being administrative, they will be performed under the general control of the Government, and, through the Minister responsible to this House—the Secretary of the day—they will be open to criticism in this House. An estate does not necessarily mean, nor indeed ought it to mean, all the property owned by a landlord. I have seen it stated that we propose to expropriate Irish landlords and to leave Ireland without the benefit of their residence there. But the policy of the Government and the policy of those who signed the Conference Report was to make it possible for Irish landlords to remain in Ireland and be the leaders of the agricultural industry in that country. An estate does not mean all the property owned by a landlord; it does mean an area which, whether taken alone or in conjunction with untenanted land added to it, when it is expedient so to do in order to remove grave economic blemishes, can be dealt with as a whole, so that those blemishes are removed. It would not be right for us to ask the House to authorise the purchase of a bad fringe of property—of a number of small holdings — and to leave the rest in the hands of the owner, unless adequate facilities are given which will enable us to make the holdings purchased a good and sound security to the State. We propose that this transaction shall be based upon a second-term rental — based upon the amount of rents which have been revised a second time. But only a minority of rents have been fixed twice in Ireland. I think only some 80,000 rents in Ireland have been fixed a second time. If we postpone dealing with the other rents—with rents which have only been fixed once—why, we should defeat our policy of increasing the pace of voluntary purchase, and we should defeat our policy of dealing with whole areas—we should have a patchwork result.

If we sought to reduce first-term rents to second-term rents now, before the time comes, some judicial process would be necessary, and we should have all the old delay, all the old costs, and all the old acrimony attaching to judicial procedure. We feel that the reduction of first-term rents to second-term rents should be compassed in the bargain made between the parties, but we lay down certain limits within which those bargains should be made. We have found it impracticable to make these limits rigid—to say that rents of this character are to be considered as first-term rents, and that rents of such another character are to be considered as second-term rents. There are cases which will occur to hon. Members who are familiar with Ireland. Take the case of a landlord who has never put his tenants to the trouble of litigation, whose tenants, although they might for twenty-two years have gone into Court, never have done so. It is clear that rents of that kind are presumptive second-term rents, and we allow them to be so considered and placed in the second-term rent category. There are other cases where first-term rents have been agreed to and registered, where the landlord has given a voluntary abatement in years of depression which he has never resumed, and where the tenants have never gone into Court. Such a rent is clearly a second-term rent, and where the agreement so provides, and where the Estates Commissioners think it equitable, such rents may be removed from the category of first-term rents and placed in the category of second-term rents. If the purchase agreement leads to the instalment to be paid to the State being lower by a certain percentage than the rent which the tenant is paying at the time of his agreement, then we say that such bargains are to be confirmed as, of course, by that method we get rid of all the cost and delay which attaches to the method now in use; and we hold that that reduction should be sufficient to be an absolute safeguard to the Exchequer of this country, which advances the money. It may also have a reflex action on the views of the tenant as to the desirability of purchasing; but from the point of view of the whole country and of the national Exchequer a reduction is necessary if a man is going to enter into a long bargain with the State. If he had not entered into a long bargain with the State, and there were two or three inclement years, he might—he does—get from the landlord an abatement on those years, but now he enters into a long transaction, and from the outset it must be of a safe and secure character for the State. The limit of reductions within which these bargains are permitted, and which may for convenience be called zones of reduction, are as follows: For second-term rents and analogous rents put into the second-term category, the Conference Report urged that the reduction should lie between fifteen and twenty-five per cent. But circumstances alter a great deal in different parts of Ireland, and we are trying, as far as we can, to provide for the rarer cases both at the top and the bottom of the scale. Therefore we maintain the same mean of twenty per cent., but we say that the limits of this zone shall be between ten and thirty per cent. For the other zone, the first-term rents and rents analogous to first-term rents, we say the limits of reduction of the instalment to be paid to the State below the rate now paid shall be between ten per cent. and forty per cent. Some may be shocked at a reduction of forty per cent., but I could not recommend it to the House for one moment unless the Bill embodied a provision that in cases where it is fair to do so the rent may be removed from the first-term rent category and put in the category of second-term rents. These limits have not been arrived at without long and careful consideration. 80,000 tenants in Ireland have bought under the Act of 1896. A man who has given what has been considered a fair price hitherto, about twenty years' purchase, receives in consequence of that Act a reduction of thirty-one per cent. after ten years, and forty-one per cent. after twenty years. The State cannot enter into bargains with a greater number of the tenantry of Ireland lasting over a long period and leave these great discrepancies. The fact that between 70,000 and 80,000 men have now purchased, and within a few years will have this reduction, makes it, in our opinion, a matter of importance to deal with this question now, and not leave it untouched much longer. At what rate, then, will annuities be calculated? A tenant now pays £4 for every £100 of advance. If he avails himself, as a great majority of them do, as almost all do, of the decadal reductions provided for by the Act of 1896—the Exchequer does not get its last penny back for seventy-two and a half years. That is the present situation. The capital repaid during a period of ten years is written off, and the debt stands again. At the end of another ten years a further sum is written off, and again at the end of another ten years. The tenant now pays four per cent., and by the method of decadal reductions it is seventy-two and a half years before the whole debt is repaid. We abolish these decadal reductions, and we say that subject to an important modification, the nature and reasons for which I will state later on, the period shall be sixty-eight and a half years. The reasons for the change are that two dangers have been found to attach to the creation of a peasant proprietary, viz., the sub-division of the holdings so created and the mortgaging of the holdings. In Continental countries where the State has aided in the creation of a peasant proprietary it has been found that after a period of years the local money-lender has come upon the scene and has been the person who has mainly benefitted. We introduce into this Bill stringent provisions against sub-division and against mortgaging; but in our opinion these prohibitions would be futile, and the whole of our policy would be frustrated, if the local money-lender were at liberty in the first year of distress to buy up fifteen or twenty of the mortgaged holdings grouped together and repay the whole of the money outstanding to the Treasury, and then proceed, as if nothing had happened, to create rack rents and middlemen's profits as though no Land Act had been passed, and not actuated, as the old order of landlords have always been actuated, by a true consideration of the neighbours amongst whom they lived. The only safeguard is to make a portion of the annuity permanent. If a portion is made permanent that cannot be done. If the moneylender buys such holdings he is paying a portion annually to the State, and he is subject to the provisions against sub-division and against mortgaging. If in the course of thirty years time it is found that these dangers are illusory we can always permit the redemption of that perpetual rent charge, but if we do not impose it at the outset it never could be imposed later on. I now come to the rate of repayment. Seven-eighths of the annuity to be repaid by the tenant purchaser will stand for repayment at 3¼ per cent., £2 15s. for interest and 10s. for sinking fund. The remaining one-eighth of the annuity will stand for interest on the irredeemable portion at £2 15s. Let me apply this rate to the zones of reduction; the superior limit, the mean, and the inferior limit of the reduction on second-term rents. Take the superior limit, a rent of £100. The tenant would be paying £90 a year as his instalment to the State, and that would be for an advance of £2,832. Take the mean limit, a tenant paying £80 in instalments per annum to the Exchequer, being 20 per cent. less than his old rent—that would stand for an advance of £2,517. Take the inferior limit of a tenant paying £70, or a reduction of £30 on the old rent—that would stand for an advance of £2,203. Then let me take the second zone, the first-term rents. Take the inferior limit of 40 per cent. reduction, the purchaser paying £60 instead of £100. That would stand for an advance of £1,888. Incidentally that gives a greater latitude for a bargain to be arrived at, but our object in making this change was administrative, to provide against the danger of sub-division and mortgaging, and of these holdings being bought up and then treated as if no Land Act had ever been passed. In the forefront of this Bill we encourage the landlords and the tenantry to make their own bargains, the landlord to employ his own solicitor or agent and merely to come to us for sanction. But there are cases where difficulties have to be decided in regard to disputes as to turbary and other easements, and in these cases where the landlord cannot be fairly asked to conclude his bargain himself, where he is held out for one or two years in composing his disputes, we permit the alternative provided in the Bill of last year—that the Estate Commissioners may purchase an estate from the landlords; but, of course, the price must be estimated within the limits of this Bill, and the instalment must fall within the zone of reductions, and, in respect of untenanted land the price must be estimated in accordance with the portion of this Bill in respect of untenanted land. The Estate Commissioners may not purchase unless three-fourths of the tenants in number and value agree to it, but it may occur—I have known cases in which it does occur—that a holding of one tenant is worth all the rest of the estate put together, and therefore we must have a dispensing and discretionary power if necessary. In these cases the Estate Commissioners may, with the approval of the Government and the Treasury, purchase without the consent of three-fourths of the tenants. After purchase the rights of the tenants under the Rent Fixing Act revive and remain intact until the majority have actually purchased their holdings; but when the majority have purchased, the minority lose their rights under the Rent-Fixing Act. I come now to our provision for dealing with untenanted land. We have first the actual tenant on an existing holding which is sold to him, but some of these holdings ought not to be sold unless they are increased in size; and in the neighbourhood of estates there are congested populations which ought to be dealt with. We, therefore, say that untenanted land may be added to the holdings which are uneconomic owing to their small size. Such new holdings, created from untenanted land, may be sold under the Bill to tenants on an estate, the sons of tenants on an estate, tenants in the neighbourhood whose holdings are less than ten acres and £5 annual value, and to any person who within twenty-five years before the passing of this Act was the tenant of such a holding. But the amount of land and the amount of credit available are not unlimited, and we wish to relieve congestion in its worst forms; but if that be so, these holdings so created need not and ought not to be of extravagant size. We therefore say that in respect of these new manufactured or created holdings we will only advance a total amount of £500 from the State in any county of which a part is congested. That limit is rigid in a county in which no part is scheduled as a congested district. In a congested county it may in certain circumstances be extended from £500 to £1,000; and that is proper because the size of farms varies through different districts of Ireland. In Monaghan, for example, and in other counties a holding worth £500 would be conspicuously less than the standard of farm prevailing in the district. In the West of Ireland it would be a fair holding. This Bill has created many expectations, and among others among persons who own a great deal of untenanted land in the West of Ireland, where it is most needed if we are to deal with the problems of congestion; and several persons have shown a disposition lately to create holdings on the off chance that the credit of the Exchequer will be placed at their disposal. We therefore provide that the same limit, not more than £500, shall be advanced by the State for any holding which has been created since March 1st of this year. I come now to the owner. We adopt a provision in the Bill of last year and extend it. To an owner advances may be made up to one-third of the aggregate value of the estate, or £20,000, whichever is least. We authorise the Estates Commissioners and Congested Districts Board to purchase an estate in the Land Judge's Court, for the sale of which an absolute order has been made; we authorise the Estates Commissioners to purchase untenanted land for the purposes on which I have touched, subject to the proviso that the amount of land in respect of which no undertaking to purchase has been made, which is vested in the Estates Commissioners, shall at no one time exceed the estimated value of £5,000,000; and we authorise the sale of untenanted land to trustees, to be held for the benefit of communities of small holders, for the purpose of turbary, pasturage, the preservation of existing woods, and the creation of new plantations. I ought not to dwell at greater length on the administrative provisions of the Bill, but if any question arises I can answer it now.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): The right hon. Gentleman knows that I would not interrupt him if I did not think it important for the convenience of the House. Before the right hon. Gentleman leaves this portion of the Bill I would ask him whether he is in a position to give us the names of the Commissioners who are to carry out the provisions of the Bill. It is manifest how much depends on the constitution of this tribunal.

*MR. WYNDHAM: It is unusual, perhaps unprecedented, to accede to such a request on the First Reading of the Bill; but I do not wish to stand on points of precedent, if it is understood that I am not creating a precedent. I feel that the situation is itself somewhat unprecedented. I know that this Bill will be examined in Ireland during the Easter recess, and that it would be almost absurd on my part to refuse to communicate the names during that recess and so I had better do it now. These gentlemen are prepared to serve, and their names will be recommended; we have not got beyond that point—the Right Hon. Frederick S. Wrench, Land Commissioner, and member of the Privy Council of Ireland. Mr. Wrench is not only a Land Commissioner, he is also a member of the Congested Districts Board, and he has therefore been brought into close touch with one portion of the work which the Estates Commissioners will have to do. He has been a Land Commissioner since 1887, and he has given me invaluable assistance during the last two years in studying and dealing with the land problem. The second Estates Commissioner will be Michael Finucane, Esq., C.S.I., Commissioner of the Presidency of Bengal. He is an Irishman; he has worked under the present Under-Secretary for Ireland, and his assistance and services I can only describe in terms of the highest praise. Mr. Finucane served under Sir Antony MacDonnell in India from 1873 to 1886, and at intervals since; he was Director of Agriculture under him in Bengal, and was decorated for his services during the famine in

1896–97. The third Estates Commissioner is William F. Bailey, Esq., legal assistant commissioner in the Land Commission. He has much experience of work in all parts of Ireland, and I may say that he has prepared a very interesting report on the present state of those who have already purchased under the Act, which will be laid before the House either to-day or to-morrow. Having acceded to the hon. and learned Member's request, I shall perhaps be forgiven if I pass very rapidly from any further points of administration ?

*MR. McCRAE (Edinburgh, E.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman, before he leaves the administrative part, whether he has made any approximate estimate of the cost to the State, taking the average of the reductions he has mentioned.

*MR. WYNDHAM: I think the hon. Member will see that he is anticipating the very step which I propose to take, which was to pass from the administrative to the financial provisions of the Bill. I should have liked to explain the provisions of the Bill dealing with congestion in the congested districts, but I recognise that I ought not to ask the whole audience to listen to all these matters. I will ask them to take it from me that we enlarge the credit of the Congested Districts Board by £1,250,000 for purchasing untenanted land. That will add to the working capital of the Congested Districts Board, who, abandoning a policy of buying a few estates here and there and trying to sell them as quickly as possible, will adopt a policy whereby a number of estates will be bought, the tenants being expected to do something to work out their own salvation. I come to the end, then, of these administrative provisions. When they are examined I venture to hope it will be conceded that we have done something, even that we have done much, to arrest the decay of Irish agriculture, and staunch the fatal stream of emigration.

I come now to finance. Advances are now made in Ireland in land stock. There are many objections to that medium. A fluctuating and unstable medium is the very worst when you have bargains which are preceded by months, and sometimes years, of tentative negotiation; and we must bear in mind that, I am afraid, the majority of Irish estates are somewhat heavily encumbered. It may be said that if land stock is down the landlord can realise and put into other securities which may be sympathetically depressed; but that will not help him to extinguish his mortgage, which, of course, must be redeemed with cash or its equivalent. So advances in Ireland will in future be made, not in stock, but in cash. To raise cash for the advances to be made in Ireland the Treasury will direct the creation of a new capital stock, to be called Guaranteed $2\frac{3}{4}$ per Cent. Stock. That stock will not be redeemable for thirty years. It is, as I think I have proved to the House, morally certain that a dividend of $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. and a sinking fund of 10s. on, roughly, seven-eighths of this stock will be always forthcoming from the instalments to be paid by the purchasers in Ireland. But it is mathematically certain that, in rare cases of default, and there have been only two irrecoverable debts in Ireland in the last twelve years, interest and sinking fund will be forthcoming from the guarantee fund. That fund has been explained in the earlier portion of my remarks; it depends on the Exchequer contributions, which go from the common Exchequer to local purposes in Ireland. If our proposals are adopted the amount of those Exchequer contributions going to Ireland in any one year will be £2,548,460. Now, as we have lowered the instalments from £4 to practically £3 5s., the amount of credit available is larger than it was when the instalments were £4. Then we could only have so many sums of £4 to add together, which amounted to the Exchequer contribution for the year; but when the instalments are practically £3 5s. it is clear that there are more sums of that amount to be added together than there were sums of £4. In effect, whereas when the instalments were £4 in order to find the amount for which you had ample security you had to multiply by twenty-five, because twenty-five, is a fourth part of a hundred, now we multiply the £2,548,460 by thirty. It will be found, under the principle now embodied by Acts of Parliament, which allows you with the Treasury's sanction to double the amount, having 150 per cent. security instead of 200 per cent. security, that there is available for such advances £152,907,960, secured on Irish land and on Exchequer advances to Ireland. Even the most sanguine estimate of the amount which is necessary in order to sell all the saleable land in Ireland does not exceed, in my opinion, £100,000,000; but there is a margin. I have named £150,000,000 as the amount which can be charged on the Exchequer contributions from this country to Ireland in respect of operations which, during twelve years, have exhibited only two cases upon which it has been necessary to come to the Guarantee Fund at all to meet irrecoverable debts. Apart from the security of the holding, the security is ample, and more than ample, but this operation must be undertaken with due and jealous regard to the national credit. The date for the commencement of the Bill is November 1st, so that in no case can we come to the City to endeavour to float a loan until the winter of this year. Nor is that all. We shall not come suddenly for large sums. I say emphatically that it will be neither financially prudent nor administratively possible to expand these operations at a pace so high as to make us come to the City for more than £5,000.000 in any one of the first three years after the passing of this Bill. It could not be done. You could not expect to raise, or if you could raise you could not expect profitably to employ, a larger amount than £5,000,000 in any one of the first three years, and you would not come to the City to ask for money until after November 1st. After three years, in my opinion, it will be possible and desirable to mend the pace. We ought to be able after three years so to mend the pace, as far as we are concerned, as to enable all saleable land to be sold in the course of some fifteen years.

It will be seen, Sir, that we have shifted the stock operations from Ireland to the London market. That transfer involves difficulties very great but not insuperable. Let me illustrate. I said but a moment ago that there had been only two irrecoverable debts in Ireland. Yes, but although there were only two irrecoverable debts in Ireland sums of money belonging to Ireland had been charged with a loss of £70,000, accruing solely from the discrepancy between the dates of the quarterly dividends on the stock and the date of the half-yearly instalments for repayment. If your dividend day comes first, you have got to find the dividends. How are you to find them? You must find them out of the Guarantee Fund. Therefore, although there have been only two irrecoverable debts in respect of land purchase in Ireland, the Guarantee Fund in Ireland has found £70,000 to meet losses due to these discrepancies in the dates. That is not the only difficulty which attaches to the stock operation. There may, in the earlier years there must almost inevitably, be losses due to the issue of an amount of stock which is temporarily in excess of the amount of cash you are prepared to advance in Ireland. It is clear that you may have delays due perhaps to some solicitor who has not attended to his duty as he might do, and the sale which you thought might be completed in October is not, as a matter of fact, completed until December. In that case you have to pay your dividend on the stock which has been issued, although you do not get the repayments at the early date which you anticipated would be the case. Then in the third place it is anticipated there will be losses due to issuing such a stock below par. How do we meet this threefold difficulty? We meet it in this way. Last year this House voted an annual sum of £1,400,000 to a purely English purpose, namely, that of education in this country, and we may say that in strict accordance with precedents which have been observed we now owe to Ireland, or Ireland really possesses at this moment in equity, an annual sum of £185,000. The losses which may be due to the discrepancy in the dates, and the losses which may be due to flotation in temporary excess of the amount underwritten in Ireland, will be covered by placing upon this money, which is not British but Irish money, a first charge of £50,000 during each one of the first four years. To meet the difficulty of a loss accruing from issuing your stock below par this Irish money will also be charged with the repayment of any additional stock which you have to issue. Supposing we want £5,000,000 of cash for advances in Ireland, and that you issue your loans, let us say, at ninety-five. [An HON. MEMBER: Eighty.] Well, my hon. friend is perhaps good at mental arithmetic and can do the sum off-hand with any figure. I prefer to do it in this way. If you issue your stock at ninety-five, in order to raise £5,000,000 you would have to issue a face value of £5,263,168 in stock. That £263,168 will be repaid out of this Irish money by a three-and a-quarter per cent. rate extending over sixty-eight and a half years. If you issue your stock at ninety-five, the amount necessary to repay interest and sinking fund would in each year be about £8,500, so that that does not present a great difficulty from the Irish point of view, this new charge being placed on new money—money which belongs as certainly, as surely, and as equitably to Ireland as the £1,400,000 voted last year belongs to England. Upon that Irish money will also be charged the added income given to the Congested Districts Board for working capital, an addition of £20,000 to be employed in the improvement of estates. I ought to say that we have tried to make a fair bargain, and if this stock is ever issued above par, then the premiums, of course, will go back to Ireland.

I pass now to one other matter—to the matter alluded to at the beginning of my remarks. We hold that the many embarrassments attaching to land purchase in Ireland, the redemption of paramount interests, the cost of such redemption the sudden diminution of of income, in the case of a tenant for life, and the fact that seven-tenths of the Irish estates are held under complicated wills and settlements drawn, in a form which has become obsolete in this country—we hold that these difficulties and embarrassments, upon which I could talk at great length, present obstacles which in our opinion would defeat our policy, unless in addition to the credit operation we were prepared to add some cash. We think the justification for adding cash aid is to be found in these complicated legal embarrassments which up to this moment have stopped Irish land purchase in every case, except in the cases of men with other interests and other resources, who have sold their Irish property to be rid of it, or in the cases of the few who, when Land Stock stood at 111, took advantage of it. We therefore say that we ought to give cash aid as it may be needed, up to a limit of £12,000,000. In view of the difficulty of the problem in Ireland we hold that such aid ought to be available as it is needed. If the sale of all saleable land is to be carried through in fifteen years, it is clear that the whole of this additional money will be needed in fifteen years. So that in view of the situation in Ireland this money must be available as it is needed, but in view of the situation in this country, in view of the importance of economy, and of not overloading the Estimates, in view of the absolute necessity that charges which cannot be anticipated shall not suddenly be placed on the Estimates, we have so provided that the maximum charge in any one year upon the Estimates shall not and cannot exceed £390,000. That charge will be slowly worked up to. Additional stock will be issued. Supposing that you require to issue £3,000,000 of stock in order to make cash advances in Ireland, and that you can take this grant at twelve per cent., you will require a further amount of stock. You will issue that, and that additional amount of stock, issued in order to raise money for this grant as it may be needed, will be paid for by a Vote on the Estimates at $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. Supposing land purchase takes fifteen years, it is evident that you will not reach the maximum of £390,000 for fifteen years. The first year a very small amount will be placed on the Estimates, and that amount will gradually increase until in fifteen years, if the operation takes fifteen years, or in thirty years, if the operation takes thirty years, you will reach a sum of £390,000. Supposing it takes fifteen years then the repayment of the total amount will extend over eighty-three years, and during the last fifteen years of those eighty-three years the £390,000 will be diminishing from that figure to nothing. As a set off to that, the Irish Government undertakes, not hastily but after the most careful examination of the Estimates in Ireland, forthwith to establish reductions amounting to £250,000 a year at a minimum estimate. And note that whereas £390,000 comes slowly on the Estimate the reduction of £250,000 ought to be reached in five years, so that we shall have effected an economy of £250,000 a year, years before the grant has reached the sum of £250,000. The immediate effect of this Bill will be a reduction of Irish Estimates. I would ask hon. Members who do not sit for Irish constituencies to bear the figure in mind. Finance is not a very engrossing subject, but it happens to be the one which is of fundamental importance in this Bill. The immediate effect of this aid grant will be a reduction, and not an increase of the Irish Estimates. But I wish to point out to hon. Members who do not sit for Irish constituencies that whereas during the last six years there has been an increase of 18 per cent. in the civil Government charges in England, there has been a decrease of 1·6 per cent. upon civil Government charges in Ireland. In fact we have been as economical as we can, and have effected a large saving in the last few years. I never fill up a post that is not required. I may say that I believe that the settlement of the land question in Ireland is vital to Ireland, and that Ireland is well advised to save money in other matters in the hope of settling this question. If there have been these effective economies in the past, and if they are going to be greater in the future, may not we come into this House on a Unionist basis and say, "May not these economies be used for that object which we prize above all others, the settlement of the land question?" As to the allocation of such a grant, we hold that of all the difficulties to which I have referred, only one proposition can safely be asserted, namely, that they press far more heavily on the small than on the large estates. We therefore say that such aid to meet those legal difficulties ought to be calculated on the purchase price, but paid to the vendor, and that the amount of it shall be graduated inversely on the purchase price. We start with 15 per cent. on an estate worth £5,000 or less, we get to 10 per cent. on an estate worth £20,000 or less, and to the minimum of 5 per cent. on estates which fetch more than £40,000. I thank the House for the great patience with which they have listened to me. I shall ill repay them if I attempt to summarise, however briefly, the administrative provisions of the Bill, but for the convenience of those who may follow me in the debate I will in three sentences recapitulate the three broad features of our finance, for finance is the whole basis of this Bill: it is the foundation on which the whole superstructure is erected. In the first place there is an operation of pure credit. We say to Ireland, "For an object which we all agree in thinking vital to your prosperity, money shall be forthcoming, guaranteed by the Common Exchequer, at 2¾ per cent. and the period of redemption shall be extended to sixty-eight and a half years." We say to the general taxpayer, so that the credit of the Empire may not be depreciated by this operation, "We shall not come suddenly for large sums, we shall not in any one of the first three years come for more than £5,000,000, and the whole of this credit operation is secured on the value of Irish land, and in addition is mathematically secured on the sums you send across to Ireland and which, if need be, you can keep in your pockets." The second broad feature is a mixed operation of credit and of cash. We say to Ireland, "Because £1,400,000 was voted last year in perpetuity for a purely English purpose, we owe to Ireland £185,000 a year and we intend to pay that debt, and we hold it to be Irish money. We charge all losses that may be incidental to the first credit operation, losses on flotation below par, losses on discrepancies between dates, cost of flotation in excess of the amount immediately underwritten, we charge all this absolutely upon this Irish fund." Then in the third place, we come to a cash operation. We say that in view of the legal embarrassments, which up to this moment have defeated the Unionist policy of land purchase carried on by Unionist Governments now for seventeen or eighteen years, and let me do justice to Mr. Bright also who first put forward the "Bright Clause"—we say that to meet the legal embarrassments which have checked and impeded our policy, sums up to a limit of £12,000,000 shall be available as required. We say to the British taxpayer that this charge will not be imposed suddenly on the Estimates, but will be gradually reached with a maximum of £390,000 a year, which will not be reached for fifteen years. That charge will be temporary, and as against it we offer at an early date effective economies amounting to £250,000 which will last for ever. Last autumn I said in a rash moment I would endeavour to play the part of "honest broker" between Irish tenants, Irish landlords, and the general taxpayer. It is not a very easy part to play, and I may very well have failed. I can only say I have honestly tried. Such, Mr. Speaker, in outline, are our proposals. We submit them to the examination of the House. I deprecate a hasty judgment—even a favourable judgment—until hon. Members in all quarters of the House, for all quarters are interested, have had an ample opportunity of studying the Bill in which these proposals are embodied. Some may say that Irish tenants who cannot purchase immediately will prove restive; or that Irish landlords will make a point of refusing to sell one acre of untenanted land which is needed and is essential if we are to deal with the problem of congestion. I do not believe it. I believe that Irish landlords and tenants will continue to act in the charitable and reasonable spirit of the Conference Report. If high hopes are to be defrauded, the failure will not be due to the Irish landlord or to the Irish tenant. It will not, I dare to prophesy, be due to the general taxpayer or his representatives in this House; for they appreciate now, and will appreciate still more clearly the magnitude of an opportunity which is unexampled, and which may never recur. Nor assuredly will it be due to any member of the public service in Ireland, who for many months have devoted themselves heart and soul to co-operating with me in this attempt. Failure, if failure there is to be, will be due to my own shortcomings in framing the Bill, for, Sir, this opportunity has enlisted an army of supporters from many sources, including some among the most unexpected. And, yet, why should I say that support from any source is unexpected? There are two alternatives before us. We can prolong for another 100 years, for another 150 years, a tragedy which is none the less, which is indeed the more tragic because it is thin and long drawn out. Or we can to-day initiate, and henceforth prosecute, a business transaction occupying some fifteen years, based in common with all sound and hopeful transactions upon the self-esteem, the probity, and mutual good-will of all concerned. Sir, I believe this thing will be done. All interests—landlord and tenant, Nationalist and Unionist, British and Irish, can hope for no tolerable issue to any view, constitutional, political, economic, which they severally may cherish until, by settling the Irish Land Question, we achieve social reconciliation in Ireland. Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce the Bill.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): In the few remarks I have to make on the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, I hope, as far as it is possible, to imitate the tone of his speech, because, whatever view we may take as to the merits of the proposals he has put before the House, I think everybody will admit that the tone of that speech was the tone of a man who realised the gravity of the situation in Ireland, and who was anxious to make a sincere attempt to grapple with it. I hope I can truthfully say I have never risen in this House to speak with such feeling of embarrassment and with such feeling of responsibility. The right hon. Gentleman did not indeed exaggerate the gravity of the problem with which he has attempted to deal. I listened with the greatest pleasure to the words in which he impressed upon non-Irish Members of this House the gravity of this great social question, which, until it is settled, undoubtedly will prevent Ireland advancing on the road of prosperity, and will prevent any permanent peace or contentment in that country. No words could exaggerate the enormous gravity of this problem, or of its urgency. I feel most keenly the responsibility which rests on me, the responsibility lest I should say something which would be taken as a want of appreciation on my part of those portions of the speech, and the proposals which seem to me well-intentioned and valuable, and lest on the other hand any words of mine should be taken as meaning I was giving here, on the spur of the moment, anything in the nature of a judgment on the merits of other portions of the speech and proposals, which, for the moment, do not commend themselves to my mind. The situation in which I speak is a somewhat strange one. Some months ago the Irish people were told that no British Government could settle this Irish Land question, that this settlement must come from an agreement between the landlords and the tenants, and the Conference which was recently held was promoted, instigated, and approved by the Government. In other words we were asked to give our advice on this question. And yet it is true that until to-day neither the representatives of the Irish landlords at that Conference, or outside it, nor the representatives of the Irish tenants were put into possession of the main features of these proposals. I do not dwell upon that by way of complaint. The right hon. Gentleman may have had his reasons, but it creates a strange situation, and it certainly creates a situation in which it is impossible for me to offer to the House anything at all in the nature of a mature judgment upon any single point. No man can question that the proposals now before the House are an enormous advance on the proposals put forward on this same question this time last year. I therefore have to congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on the fact that he is in possession of sufficiently increased power upon this question to put forward proposals of an entirely different character, proposals which aim really at a settlement of the question, in place of proposals such as those of last year, which would not have led to a settlement of this question at all.

The fact that the Government have proposed this bonus of £12,000,000 to assist this settlement is an indication that they are desirous of settling this question, and have made up their minds to deal in a courageous manner with it. I recognise fully, that although the right hon. Gentleman has to my mind made out a conclusive case to satisfy the misgivings of the British taxpayer, that he will make no loss, but a good bargain, still I do think if the Government did not believe by this means they would be able to make a settlement of this question, they would not in the financial circumstances of the country at this moment, and with the other claims pressing on the taxpayer, have made the proposal at all. Therefore I take this proposal as an indication of the sincerity of the desire of the Government to provide a settlement of the Irish land question. All those who are interested in Ireland must feel intensely gratified at the way in which the suggestion of this bonus has been received by the representatives of all parties in this country. The debate which took place on the Address went entirely upon this point, and on the supposition that the bonus was to be much larger than as a matter of fact has been proposed. That debate led to an expression of opinion from all sides of this House, and from the public Press of this country which certainly was gratifying to us, and which strengthened the position of the Government. I offer absolutely no opinion as to whether this bonus is sufficient for the purpose. I reserve absolutely the expression of any definite opinion at all. But I am justified at any rate in congratulating the Government on the main proposal, and in taking it as an indication of their being in earnest in this matter.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I confess myself in some difficulty in dealing with this question; my criticism must be rather in the nature not of censure, of praise or blame, but rather in the nature of interrogatory. In the first place I am not satisfied in my own mind that the bonus should be distributed in inverse ratio to the amount of the purchase money. The object I take it of the Government is to give the greatest amount of relief to the man who needs it most, but it does not follow because the estate is small and the purchase money is small that it is a poor estate. There are many estates in the West of Ireland where the rental is considerable, £10,000 or £20,000 a year. In those cases the landlords who would sell would get very little indeed, but on the other hand an estate might be let out to a number of small tenants, each paying £2 or £3 a year rent, but it does not follow that that is a poor estate. Therefore I say the system of distribution of the bonus will have to be most carefully considered, and at the present moment I am not convinced that the Bill will carry out the object the Government has in view. There is another point—by this system of distribution the small bonus will be given to the large landlord. The number of these large landlords may be small, but they have a very large number of tenants; and for the settlement of this land question it is essential that these estates should be brought into the market. Then again, the right hon. Gentleman is going to make a perpetual rent-charge on the land of one-eighth. The object he has in view in reserving that rent-charge is one that every man must approve—it is essential that precautions should be taken to prevent sub-division and sale and mortgage, otherwise in a generation or two Ireland will find herself in as bad, or a worse condition than at the present moment. But I cannot conceive why in order to achieve the object the right hon. Gentleman has in view it is necessary to reserve as much as one-eighth—it seems to me that any reservation, however small, would be sufficient to give the Government this power to prevent re-sale and mortgage. We should very seriously consider this matter, because if in trying to prevent this evil we take away from the Irish people the sense of absolute ownership, we shall do much to defeat the object we have at heart, and injure the chances of the successful working of the Bill. Therefore I would press strongly on the right hon. Gentleman to reconsider this question, with the view to the reservation of a rent charge less than one-eighth.

With regard to the administration—of course the success of any measure of this kind will very largely depend on the *personnel* of its administration—and with regard to the three gentlemen who have been named, I will take first of all Mr. Wrench. I honestly believe that is a name that will not command the support of either the landlords or the tenants of Ireland. Mr. Bayley, I think, will have the confidence of both landlords and tenants. The third gentleman has the merit of being absolutely unknown. This can hardly be considered a thoroughly satisfactory tribunal—one unsuitable man, one suitable man, and one unknown man. However, I heartily congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on the fact of it being a non-judicial tribunal. Nothing would do more harm to this measure than the impression that it would be run by any of the old gang, whose conduct we are not allowed by the Rules to discuss on the floor of the House of Commons. I am glad the right hon. Gentleman has made a departure in that respect, and that the officials will be servants of the Government, whose conduct can be discussed on the Estimates in the House of Parliament. There was one thing that surprised me in the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman. He said there would be no withdrawing of any right that the tenants possessed at present. He used that with reference to the right the tenant had to go in and purchase his holding at the present moment. The right hon. Gentleman will remember perfectly well that Clause 36 of the Bill of last year raised serious opposition. It was denounced on both sides and excited much antagonism. It proposed to deprive the tenants under certain circumstances of the right of having the rents fixed by the Land Commission. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that in the case of the new Commission buying the estate they are to be satisfied before they buy that three-fourths of the tenants are willing to buy back the holdings from them, and he has told us that in special cases a bare majority of the tenants is all that is required. Now I want to know how you are going to deal with the minority of one-fourth and the minority of almost one-half. If I understand him correctly it amounts to this. The tenants in these cases are to be compelled to buy, and are to be deprived of their rights under the Act of 1881. It may be said that is an extreme case, but these matters are best tested by extreme cases. A bare majority of the tenantry on each estate in Ireland might agree to buy, and the remaining half of the tenantry might be unwilling to do so, and then they would lose their right under the Act of 1881 to have their rents fixed. That is a provision which will excite universal disapproval in Ireland. I know these are exceptional cases. The ordinary transactions will be between landlord and tenant, and therefore this will not arise at all except in cases where the landlord and tenant cannot come to an agreement, and the estate is bought by the Estate Commissioners. But the mere fact that there will not be many cases, will not enable the right hon. Gentleman to get a Clause accepted in Ireland which will deprive any class of Irish tenants of their rights to get the purchase price fixed under the Act of 1881. If that Clause stands in the Bill it will be as vehemently opposed in Ireland as was Clause 36 of his Bill last year. And as he gave that up last year, I hope it is not too much to expect that he will also give up this Clause.

*MR. WYNDHAM: They have to pay under another section. In respect of three-fourths under the Act of 1896, they are forced to buy.

MR. REDMOND: The right hon. Gentleman knows that is not an answer to my contention. Section 40 only applies where three-fourths of the tenants are willing. I recognise, of course, it is a most unreasonable thing that a handful of tenants should be able to obstruct a purchase, but it is a totally different thing when you say that fifty-one men out of 100 can coerce the others by saying if you do not agree to our terms you will lose your rights to get a fair rent fixed under the Act of 1881. On the question of finance I speak with great hesitation. It is a matter with which I am not competent to deal, but under any such circumstances it would be nothing short of ridiculous without having heard more details if I expressed any opinion. It is impossible for me now to deal with the number of years purchase, and how it will work out for the landlord and tenant, but it is a matter of the greatest importance and will excite interest and attention in Ireland. As far as I can understand the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, it is clear he does not offer, either to the landlord or the tenant, as good terms as the landlords proposed. I deeply regret that, and I may say that I regret he has cut down the terms to the landlord, quite as much as I regret his cutting down the terms to the tenant. This is a voluntary arrangement, and the only way to make it work is by satisfying the landlords that it is safe and wise for them to sell, and the tenants that it is safe and wise for them to buy. Still, the fact remains that this Bill is a great advance on the Bill of last year.

I do not fully understand the arrangement made with reference to the first-term and the second-term rents. How does this matter stand? The tenants of Ireland had their rents fixed once, and the time for having them fixed a second time has arrived. There are some 80,000 of the second-term rents, and these show a reduction on the first-term rents of about 20 or 22 per cent. Now, if the second-term rents are to be taken as the basis of this transaction, then, before you enter into your calculation at all, the oustanding first-term rents ought to be reduced to the average of the 80,000 second-term rents. And to say that you will permit a transaction which will give second-term tenants an immediate reduction of from 10 to 30 per cent., and then to say that in the case of the first-term rents you will only give a reduction of from 20 to 40 per cent., I think that is unsatisfactory, and I should like it explained more fully how you arrive at that proportion. The right hon. Gentleman is apparently going to consider his second-term rents—rents of all holdings in Ireland—that have not gone into the Land Courts at all. If this is put in the Bill it will work great injustice, because, as every one knows, there are a very large number of tenants who never went into the Land Court at all. But the right hon. Gentleman is going to take the second-term rents and only give them the reduction of second-term rents. Is he going to take one of the cases which was never in the Committee and say that although there has been a steady reduction of 20 per cent., yet that not being a judicial rent it is not to be taken into account, and the nominal rent is to be regarded as the basis of the transaction? I can assure him that such a course would work the gravest injustice, and I rather think that even the spokesmen of the landlords in this House will agree with the view that the voluntary abatement should be taken into account as if it had been sanctioned judicially.

Then there is the provision as to the reinstatement of tenants. I acknowledge that the right hon. Gentleman has put into this Bill a provision which, in a large number of cases at any rate, will provide a remedy for one of the greatest evils which has existed in the social condition of Ireland for a long time past. At any rate, that is an advance on anything ever proposed in a Land Bill brought forward in this House. What I desire to know is, whether the same opportunity will be afforded to future tenants as if they were judicial tenants.

*MR. WYNDHAM: Hear, hear!

MR. JOHN REDMOND: I am glad to hear that. I only hope the same will apply to the caretakers. What has constantly taken place for years past under the eviction-made-easy Clause has been that merely by serving a man with a notice he has ceased to be a tenant but has been left in possession as a caretaker. He continued to pay rent from year to year but had no legal status, not even as a future tenant. I should feel very much assured if the right hon. Gentleman would say that the same opportunities would be given to such men of purchasing their holdings. [NATIONALIST Cheers.] The right hon. Gentleman need not be afraid that this measure will meet with any unfair criticism or reception in Ireland. The Irish people are quite in earnest in desiring to settle the land question by an honest purchase transaction. Irish tenants and landlords are absolutely agreed in the desire to settle this question as speedily as may be and in a perfectly straightforward manner. [NATIONALIST Cheers.] I think the right hon. Gentleman will find, that whatever may be the fate of this Bill, it will not meet with unfair or dishonest criticism. I am not going to say that the Bill is satisfactory or otherwise; but it will be criticised by the people who have come together in perfect sincerity to endeavour to bring an end to the social trouble which exists in Ireland.

We, on these benches, have great responsibility in this matter, and I speak with a feeling of that responsibility. But I am fortified by the knowledge that this Bill will be discussed in every town and village and hamlet throughout Ireland. The Irish people are quick witted and are not likely to be led blindfold by their leaders. They will easily understand the meaning of this Bill and its purpose, and will soon find out whether it will be advisable for them to take advantage of it or not. They will soon have an opportunity of discussing the measure, because on 14th or 15th April there will be held in Dublin a National Convention, summoned specially for the purpose of deciding whether the Bill is to be accepted or rejected. Even if I were in a position to do so I should hesitate to express my judgment until the Convention has spoken. There has been some misunderstanding as to the constitution of this Convention. People in England are rather inclined to disregard its authority, describing it as a gathering of delegates of the United Irish League. That is not the case. Reading the names of the Members of the Convention it is impossible to construe in any country in the world a more absolutely democratic and representative National Assembly than that which will have to give a decision on this Bill. The clergy and every organised public body in Ireland, political or non-political, will have representatives at this Convention, and the right hon. Gentleman will therefore have the consolation of knowing this Bill will be discussed and decided upon by a thoroughly democratic and representative body in Ireland.

I will end, as I began, by telling him that he need not be afraid of unfair criticism. The Bill will be judged by the Irish people as a measure which will either settle the Irish land question or else be worthless. The time has passed when any measure such as that of last year—which could not possibly settle the question—is likely to be accepted by public opinion in Ireland. If the Irish people come to the conclusion that the Bill affords a reasonable hope of a settlement of this question it will be accepted by them. More than that I cannot say at present. I do not think it would be altogether wrong of me if I complimented the right hon. Gentleman on the lucidity with which he explained the Bill, which although so complicated, was made so clear to us. It is the greatest effort ever yet made to settle the Irish Land Question by purchase. This is a great Bill, and I confess that it is a safe Bill, because the right hon. Gentleman has proved to demonstration that the British taxpayer can lose nothing, and is almost certain to make financial and moral gains. Under these circumstances I do not think that the Irish Members from this quarter of the House will think it necessary to debate the matter at any length to-night. We will leave it as it is now. I say in conclusion that the decision in this matter will rest with public opinion in Ireland, and the right hon. Gentleman will have the consolation of knowing that that public opinion will be honestly elicited and honestly expressed.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): I have had the honour and good fortune of having spoken in this House on many occasions on Irish Land Bills, and I have always observed one distinguishing feature in these Bills; they all meant to plunder the Irish landlords. This Bill is quite different from all these. It is the only Bill that I ever knew of which induced the hon. and learned Member for Waterford to stand up on that side of the House and I on this side of the House to give our approval—not an absolute but a qualified approval. I say qualified, and for this reason; that it is a most complicated measure. My right hon. friend has admitted in his speech that it has taken a year and a half to prepare; and a year and a half's preparation was boiled down into an hour and forty minutes of the time of the House. It would be very absurd on my part, who have only listened to that hour and forty minutes explanation to express any definite opinion as to the merits of the details of the Bill. The speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite was remarkable in this respect, that his objections to the Bill, so far as he understood it from listening to the speech of the Chief Secretary, were limited in character; that that part of the Bill which deals with the tenants whose rents have not been fixed by the Land Courts, met from him apparently a slight objection; at all events the hon. and learned Gentleman was not perfectly certain in his own mind what the Bill contained on that subject. But it must be satisfactory to my right hon. friend that no greater objection to the Bill has presented itself to the hon. and learned Gentleman. The hon. and learned Gentleman did not touch on the finance of the Bill, and probably the objection to the finance in the mind of the hon. and learned Gentleman is the same objection which occurs to my mind, viz.—that the financial concessions accorded in this Bill do not go as far as he thinks they ought to go; and in that I quite sympathise with him. There is one particular fact at any rate which it must be difficult for any Member who has sat in this House for any period of time to realise; and that is, that this is the first opportunity of their having been able to see within these walls a united Ireland. On former historic occasions we used to see one side of the House bent on plundering the other. Members of this House from Ireland, I believe, represent absolutely the feelings of the Irish people, at the present moment, on this matter. They desire a settlement of this long-vexed question, and I venture to say that during the last 800 years such an opportunity has never presented itself as this to the Parliament of England. I do not think we are asking too much. I do not think that the demands are extravagant on the part of the landlords. What we have asked is this—that when we have settled the land question, you will not deprive us of the power of living in our native land in the future. I say that that is an appeal which we Irish landlords make to the British House of Commons and to the British people; and we say that it is founded on justice and fair play. We are Irishmen just as much as the tenants are, or as the hon. Gentlemen opposite are. We love our native land as much as they do, and I believe that the people of Ireland, represented as they have been by their leaders, have come to the conclusion that Irish landlords, after all, are not so black as they have been painted in former years by their present admirers.

The main principle of the Bill, which I gathered from the speech of my right hon. friend, is that when this settlement takes place it will be such a settlement as will enable the Irish landlords to live in Ireland, though they will not enjoy quite as much income as they do now. There is a difficulty which I have always foreseen, though I do not think the difficulty lies with the right hon. Gentlemen, or with the Party I represent. I think we are both willing to be moderate in our demands, for both desire a settlement. What I am afraid of, however, is John Bull. The usual idea out of doors, and even amongst some Members of this House, is that this Bill is based on the principle that the unfortunate British taxpayers will have to empty their pockets to the tune of many millions. I think that they may put that idea out of sight. If the right hon. Gentleman's computation is correct, and if it is possible to save £6,000,000 on rent in Ireland, the British taxpayer during the first year will be burdened to the enormous extent of £32,000 or £33,000. It will increase as the years go by, until all the land in Ireland is bought, to a burden of £390,000 a year. If this is a success, and if by the passing of the Bill you secure peace and prosperity in Ireland, the cost will not exceed a quarter of the price of one ironclad. When you are able to spend so many millions on war, you might give a few thousand pounds to peace. I think the British taxpayer, who includes the Irish taxpayer, need not fear that ruin will stare him in the face if the Bill be passed. Besides that, there are economies which my right hon. friend indicated which will form a considerable part in diminishing the expense to which the taxpayer will be put. This is to be carried out by a Commission, and I quite agree with the hon. and learned Gentleman that it was essential that this should not be a Judicial Commission. The Commissioners are Mr. Wrench, Mr. Bayley, and Mr. Finucane. I have no doubt they will act fairly. I do not suppose that any of them will be on the side of the landlord too much. Certainly Mr. Bayley will not. With regard to Mr. Finucane, I do not know anything about him, except that he comes from India. I do not know why they chose a gentleman from India. I suppose he has an acquaintance with tigers, which may be useful to him in Ireland. On the whole, I think we may be satisfied that this Commission will act fairly to both sides, or rather between the three parties—the British taxpayer, the landlord, and the tenant.

I have no intention whatever of wandering through these financial mazes, in which my right hon. friend trod with such an easy and fairy step. I should only get entangled and involved. This Bill requires to be read carefully, and to be carefully considered. In that matter I can reiterate for my colleagues, what the hon. and learned Gentleman has said on behalf of his friends, that the Bill will receive a fair and candid consideration. We, at any rate, do not intend to throw any obstacle in the way of a final settlement of this question, and I am glad to learn that hon. Gentlemen opposite are animated by the same spirit. I thought it rather a formidable prospect which the hon. and learned Gentleman alluded to, namely, that this Convention would seize this Bill and examine it in all its parts—a Convention representing apparently the Irish land interest, the Roman Catholic clergy but certainly not the Protestant clergy [NATIONALIST cries of "All denominations," and "Brother Sloan."]. I am sure the hon. and learned Gentleman will see that it will receive fair and candid consideration, and then with both sides united, and with that condition of mind existing in Ireland at the present moment which never existed before—why, Sir, there is no smell of blood in the air in Ireland now; the condition of the public mind is more at peace and more filled with hope than it has ever been before—I say with that condition of affairs existing, with a good-humoured Ireland to deal with, with a peaceful Ireland to deal with, it would be to my mind an insane thing on the part of the British taxpayer to grudge these few thousand pounds, which after all he never can feel, because the money which is to be expended is a trifle compared with the larger part of the money asked for, and which is absolutely secure. It is a small trifle that is asked for, and if it secures peace and prosperity for Ireland it is the cheapest money that Great Britain has ever laid out.

*Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): I shall only interpose for a few moments, mainly in order to deprecate on the part of those in this House who represent the taxpayer beyond the circle of the Irish Members on either side, the formation, and still more the expression, of any summary judgment on the great scheme which the right hon. Gentleman, with so much power and persuasiveness, has expounded to the House. It is not only that it is a scheme, as we all were able to gather by listening to his speech, of extraordinary complexity, but also that the issues involved, and which it raises, are grave and almost momentous, and therefore it ought not to be made the subject of a rash and possibly partial opinion by any Member of this House. The Members of this House, I believe without exception, are anxious that peace should be restored in Ireland—if restored is the proper word—because the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down says that this war has lasted for 800 years, and that this is the first good opportunity the House of Commons has had for dealing with the question. The House of Commons has only had during a hundred of these years any right to interfere in the matter. But however that may be, we wish to see an end put to the disastrous social and agrarian conflict which has hindered the prosperity and the advancement of Ireland. We also recognise that for that purpose there may be sacrifices and efforts which ought to be made by the people, not only of Ireland but of this island, and not only for the sake of Ireland, but for the sake of ourselves, because we shall directly be advantaged quite irrespective of anything that may happen within the circuit of Ireland itself. But the very fact that we have to face certain efforts and sacrifices, that we are to have, what is almost more serious, our Imperial credit hypothecated to such an enormous extent, makes it our duty not only to look into the detailed provisions of the Bill, in order to see that equity is preserved between those affected, but also to see, as it will be our obvious duty to see, to the best of our power whether this scheme will really attain the object for which those sacrifices and efforts are to be made. That can only be learned in process of time by seeing how it is received by all classes of men in and out of Ireland, and on these grounds it is eminently and obviously a case where we ought not only not to be expected to express a definite opinion, but ought not to indulge in the opportunity of offering any definite opinion.

There are one or two points which the right hon. Gentleman, with all the fulness and frankness of his speech, has left still in some doubt. The first of these is as to the provisions against mortgaging and subdividing holdings. There is no question that that is the curse of peasant proprietorship in many countries, and, although the right hon. Gentleman said that certain provisions were designed for that purpose, I think we should like to know a little more as to how this is to be effected. The second point is this—it has been already referred to by the hon. Member for Waterford — what will be the mode in which the cash aid is to be estimated and distributed? Is every selling landlord to have a share? That is the point. In what way is that to be distributed and applied? Another point is this. What comes of the rent-fixing operation that has been going on under the Act of 1881, and of the tribunal and machinery established by that Act? I next come to another point which the hon. Member for Waterford referred to, and which I noted in this way. If the tenants do not choose to purchase—those who are the outstanding fourth on an estate—do they remain under that Act—do they retain their advantages under it? And, coming to the other side of the picture—what becomes of the landlord who declines to sell? What will be his position in the future of the agrarian economy of Ireland? My last question is this. Is the sum of £12,000,000, named for the aid grant, a real Estimate of the amount which will probably answer for the purpose, or is it the extreme limit which is not to be exceeded? On these points I think the right hon. Gentleman will do well to take an opportunity before the discussion closes to give the House the information that is required. I assume by all that has been said that there will be a considerable interval before the next stage of the Bill, and in the meantime I would advise all those with whom I have any influence to content themselves with the expression of our appreciation of the manner in which the right hon. Gentleman has laid this great scheme before the House and the country.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I agree with the right hon. Gentleman that Members would be very daring and rash who ventured to give any definite opinion upon a complicated measure of this kind. But there are some of us who have been in this struggle for many years, and have followed the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary with extreme interest today. Speaking for myself, I believe that the proposals he has laid before the House are epoch-making proposals, and I believe, although I am not pledging myself to any particulars in the Bill—and I shall have to ask the Chief Secretary some questions before I sit down—I believe that from to-night a new era will start in Ireland upon this land question. There is one difficulty which I fear will not be solved—as anyone can see who knows anything about the question—and that is the question as to what is to happen upon those estates where either the inducement to the landlord is not sufficient to make him sell, or where no inducement will make him sell. That brings us to a difficult point. You will find in the province of Ulster a large number of landlords with feudal ideas rooted in their minds whom no inducement will tempt to sell. You will find the same feeling prevailing in certain districts in the South and West. You will find this unwillingness to sell upon any terms; and what we shall be face to face with in a few years is this most difficult problem—I admit it is difficult—you will find a large number of landlords declining to sell, and you will find a large number of the best of the Irish tenants unable to buy. They will be penalised for their very virtues, whilst men who have given trouble will get the advantages which ought to have gone to all. I know what questions are raised by a problem of this kind, and I merely state the problem in order that the House should see that there are difficulties not touched by the right hon. Gentleman's speech. There is a curious omission from that speech of which I would like an explanation. According to the notice paper, this is a Bill—

> "to amend the law relating to the occupation and ownership of land in Ireland, and for other purposes relating thereto; and to amend the Labourers' (Ireland) Act."

But not a word has been said with regard to the labourers' question. That is an omission which probably arose from pressure of time, but I am bound to tell the right hon. Gentleman that it is perfectly impossible to hope for any final solution of this question which will please the labourers if they are left out of account. I take it from the Chief Secretary that there is no desire to leave them out of account, and that the Bill will be as it is described on the Notice Paper.

I regret to hear from the right hon. Gentleman that the decadal reductions are to be abolished. The decadal system, first brought into play in the Act of 1896 by the present President of the Board of Trade, has been accepted by almost all the tenants in Ireland, and has no doubt extended the period of repayment. The Irish tenant, as a rule, has rather the notion that posterity should bear some of the burden, and the decadal system has been seized upon almost universally. I really cannot see why it should be left out of the Bill, because after all the basis of the decadal system is that at the end of the decennial period the amount of the capital paid is estimated, and the interest has not to be paid on the capital which has been repaid. That will be a point for discussion in Ireland, for the tenants are very firmly wedded to the system.

There is another matter of extreme importance. The basis of purchase, according to the Chief Secretary, is to be second-term rents. I tried to follow the right hon. Gentleman very carefully, but I confess I failed to grasp his argument on that point. At the Land Conference it was decided that the basis of purchase should be the second-term rents, or their fair equivalent. But, as my hon. and learned friend opposite put it, the difference between the first-term rents and the second-term rents is a matter of 22 per cent. I assume, from the fact that the contrary has not been stated, that the Land Commission as a rent-fixing machine is to go on, and that, instead of any automatic reduction in fixing the second-term rents, the Commissioners will proceed as they are now doing. That is a very serious matter. There is no use in blinking the fact that ever since the Land Conference Report was issued, and the basis of purchase decided to be the second-term rents, the Land Commission has been raising rents. I may give the Shirley estate in County Monaghan as an example of that. There 600 tenants have gone into Court; forty-seven have had second-term rents fixed, and forty out of sixty-five have been left alone. Therefore this question of second-term rents, and the fixing of the basis of purchase on those rents is a very serious matter, and will have to be seen to before the Bill is read a second time.

As regards the question of mortgages, I pressed that as hardly as it could be pressed at the Conference. I agree with the principle enunciated to-night by the Chief Secretary, but the amount to be made irredeemable is a totally different question. If it be merely the right to intervene in cases of improper mortgage that is required, then a nominal quit rent would be as effective as one-eighth of the purchase money. I agree that mortgaging and subdividing must be effectively controlled, or in fifty years hence we shall have a position worse even than at present, but the amount is a serious matter. It takes away from the sense of ownership, and to take away that sense is to imperil a good deal.

As to the rights of tenants under the Act of 1881, I did not understand the Chief Secretary as interfering with those rights at all. I understood him to say that the present land purchase proceedings would continue if people chose to avail themselves of them. I may be wrong, but I did not understand him to deal with the question of fair rent at all. But I do say that the Government may make up their minds that the Irish people in every province will not consent to any infringement of the rights of the tenants under the Act of 1881, until the freehold of the farm is conferred on every occupier. Nothing will induce them to give up that position. The Irish tenants, if they gave that away, would be like an army in a battle without ammunition, and the Chief Secretary may take it for granted that if this measure contains anything like Clause 36 of the Bill of last session, there is a bad time before this House and the country. That is the one thing the tenants will never consent to. We shall have an opportunity of discussing the Bill in Ireland during the Easter recess. My right hon. and gallant friend the Member for North Armagh is not in his place, but we are to have a Convention in Dublin, and if he does not care to attend that in Dublin perhaps he will honour us with his presence in Belfast. I believe the Bill is a great Bill, designed for a great and beneficent work, and I hope that in the outcome Irish Members on both sides will be able to give the Government their cordial support.

*Mr. M'CRAE: I think the right hon. Gentleman is to be congratulated on his lucid exposition of the Bill. I do not wish to press him too hardly on the First Reading, but I do not think he quite answered the question I put as to whether the amount of cash to be granted had been arrived at after a careful estimate had been made of the sum that really would be necessary under the scheme. In the present situation all sides were willing to go a great way in order to secure a satisfactory solution of this problem, and it would be a mistake to estimate the tax on the British people at an inadequate sum. The right hon. Gentleman said that apart from the credit loan the sum the British taxpayer was to be responsible for was £12,000,000. That in my opinion, is quite inadequate for the purpose. It bears a very small proportion to the reduction which the right hon. Gentleman estimated to be necessary. On the second-term rents he spoke of the reduction as being between 15 and 25 per cent. or on the first-term rents between 20 and 40 per cent. On the other side, taking the capitalised rental of Ireland at the right hon. Gentleman's figure of £152,000,000, the £12,000,000 represents only 8 per cent., and it is only 12 per cent. on the reduced figure of £100,000,000. I know the right hon. Gentleman does not expect the whole of the land to come into the market, but I think it would be well for the House and the country to be assured that the sum of £12,000,000 has been arrived at after careful consideration of the sum which is likely to be required from the British Exchequer.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I should like to ask my right hon. friend, whom I congratulate on his speech, one or two questions. I do not thoroughly understand some of the financial portions of the scheme. I understood there was to be an operation of credit at 2¾ per cent., but I am not sure whether he said that that operation of credit would amount to the raising of £100,000,000.

*Mr. WYNDHAM: That would be the outside sum.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: So that it would be an operation of credit to raise £100,000,000, of which only £5,000,000 would be raised in any one year?

*Mr. WYNDHAM: Of the first three years.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: And it may subsequently be increased. The tenant is to pay 4 per cent. on that.

*Mr. WYNDHAM: No.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: That is the point on which I wanted some explanation. Then my second point is, I understand him to say that there is a sum of £185,000 a year which he considers to be due to Ireland, to be in fact Irish money; that will be on the Estimate

I presume. That £185,000 is to bear the losses on flotation and such things as that. Then I understand that he proposes to place on the Estimates a sum of £390,000— not all at the beginning, but as a maximum. I should have added the £390,000 to the £185,000, but perhaps he will explain whether I am right or wrong as to that. I also understand him to claim economies amounting to £250,000 a year on the Irish Estimates. I suppose those economies have been already realised?

*MR. WYNDHAM made a remark which was inaudible in the Press Gallery.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Then we may understand that there will be a diminution to the extent of £250,000 on future Irish Estimates. Those are the only points to which I desire to refer at present.

MR. COGHILL (Stoke-upon-Trent): We must all congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on the way in which he has introduced this Bill. His speech shows that he has a clear grasp of its provisions, but I am not sure that we are all in the same position. The Bill bears a strange resemblance to a Bill which had a great deal to do with bringing me into the House of Commons for the first time in 1886: I mean Mr. Gladstone's Land Bill—a Bill which was strongly denounced, and was certainly not acceptable to the country at large. The right hon. Gentleman has drawn a picture of what is to happen if this Bill passes, but he prefaced it with a very large "if." What guarantees can he give us as to the finality of this scheme? Ever since 1886 we have been engaged in passing Land Bill after Land Bill, and I am rather weary of the process. If this was the first Land Bill of which I had heard, I must say, that after the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, I should be inclined to say, "By all means pass your Bill, and let us have no criticism upon it." But, unfortunately, that is not the position. It is all very well to say that these are the proposals now, but will the proposals remain as they are, or will they be increased as time goes on? Then we are told that these proposals will bring peace to Ireland. After the experiences of the last 100 years I think I may be forgiven if I am a little sceptical as to that. I am not at all sure that after the passing of this Bill Ireland will pass into the peaceful period which has been predicted. The hon. and learned Member for Waterford the other day announced that he for one would not give up his opinion with regard to the need for Home Rule. [NATIONALIST cheers.] I quite understand the view of the hon. Gentlemen opposite, and I know they will try just as much to obtain Home Rule after this Bill passes as they did before. But supposing a feeling of tension arises again between Ireland and this country, what will happen in regard to the payments under this Bill. Suppose, for instance, that the "no rent" manifesto was issued again with regard to the payment of the loan? Would the right hon. Gentleman then take proceedings against the whole nation?

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): We should make you Lord-Lieutenant, and then it would be all right.

MR. COGHILL: When it comes to the question of a free gift to Ireland it is a totally different matter, and I do not think that we should be called upon to make this large free gift to Ireland. It seems to me that there is one very suspicious circumstance at the present time. We find now that there is a union between Orangemen and Nationalists, and all because there is an alluring prospect of a raid upon the British Treasury. We find my hon. and gallant friend the Member for North Armagh speaking in a totally different way, for he now recognises in the Nationalist Members the wisest of patriots, and in every sense considers them very good fellows. When we find a union of this kind between two Parties, I think it behoves the representatives of the British taxpayer to look very closely into these proposals. When any sort of raid is made upon the British Exchequer, we have a right to say to the Chief Secretary for Ireland that this is not the time to make a demand for £12,000,000 upon the British taxpayer. We have just had large demands made upon us in regard to the Army and Navy, and I have willingly supported the Government with regard to those demands, but when it comes to a free gift of £12,000,000 for a scheme, the success of which is very uncertain, I say this is not the time to make such a demand. No matter how golden the opportunity may be, this is not the time to come to the taxpayer and ask for a free gift of £12,000,000 to the people of Ireland. I do not wish to raise any other objection to this Bill, beyond saying that these proposals ought to be scrutinised very closely. Willing as I am to do anything I can to assist the people of Ireland to come to a settlement in regard to the land question, I must say that I do not entertain the opinion that if the land question were settled the feeling of unrest would cease to exist in Ireland. I feel that there are other questions which will arise, and it is in that belief that I am unable to accept the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman.

*MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): The hon. Member has entertained the House by weeping salt tears over the disappearance of Donnybrook Fair. When we were engaged in recrimination, and when we were disorderly, we were a disgrace to the House of Commons, and now when for the first time an Orangeman can speak well of a Nationalist, the hon. Member who has just sat down thinks the glories of Britain have departed. I think the landlords have got off very handsomely indeed, but you must remember they have been doing your work in Ireland for 800 years. You have just been lavishing £30,000,000 on your Navy, and £30,000,000 on your Army, and £2,000,000 on those new submarines, which may pay a premature visit to the bottom of the sea; and it is strange that on the first occasion since the Union of Great Britain and Ireland an hon. Member should get up and protest that Irish Members were for the first time united. What do you want us to do? Do you want us to walk across the floor of the House to the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh and say to him, "Will you tread on the tail of my coat?" I am glad we have arrived at this stage, when only one Englishman out of the entire body of 670 British Members has risen to object to the very moderate proposals which the right hon. Gentleman the Irish Secretary has made. I certainly do not intend to enter upon a long debate on this occasion, but I would say that hon. Gentlemen opposite, and especially hon. Gentlemen like the hon. Member who has just spoken, should remember that undoubtedly Members on this side of the House with whom I disagree to some extent have made large sacrifices of opinion—I will not say of conviction—but large sacrifices in what they conceive to be the interests of peace. The Chief Secretary said this was no simulated feeling. A nation cannot play the hypocrite. You cannot get people who have been divided in the past, who have been at war with one another—you cannot get these people simulated for the first time to a false and pretended affection, unless there is some new light thrown upon the minds and hearts of both parties with regard to the situation. I certainly will not in this House take needless opportunity of disagreeing with my hon. colleagues who have signed that Report.

There are two or three matters which seem to have escaped notice which I wish to ask about. I cannot agree with what the hon. Gentleman the Member for Waterford said to the objection in principle, if indeed he raised it, with regard to the retention of one-eighth, if it be intended that one-eighth shall fructify in ease of local taxation, and for the benefit of the general body of the people of Ireland. But if the one-eighth is to come perpetually to the British Treasury, a more extraordinary or extravagant proposal never was made. If the one-eighth is to go in perpetuity to the British taxpayer in exchange for the £12,000,000 a harder bargain was never made, and unless I have some assurance on that point I shall certainly object to the form in which the proposal now stands. In sixty-eight and a-half years by the Sinking Fund you will have paid off seven-eighths. Then why not begin some system of Sinking Fund and pay off the remaining one-eighth or, instead of making two bites at a cherry, why not clear it off altogether? Of course I know it can be said the Government are only getting bare interest on their loan, but why is an eighth selected, as irredeemable, to found a plea for State intervention about mortgages and sublettings? A mere peppercorn reservation would secure the State full power for such purposes. On the other hand, if the Sinking Fund principle was applied to this eighth, a valuable asset for the Irish nation would in half a century arise. There is a tendency to look at this question from the point of view of catching votes and talking to the gallery, and from that which constituents would consider best in their own cases. Yet if you consider the interests of the urban and labouring population, whose taxes will, to some extent, go as an insurance fund, this great boon to the agricultural population leaves them almost untouched, and they may argue that there is a great deal to be said in favour of applying this one-eighth to the ease of local taxation and for the benefit of the country as a whole. If I understood the proposal in that sense I should cordially adopt it, but if I understand that this one-eighth is to go in aid of the British taxpayer I should only compare it with the proposal made by Mr. Gladstone, of whom I do not wish to speak disrespectfully. After the Irish Famine, with regard to the striking off of the famine loan, which I do not think amounted to more than £4,000,000 Mr. Gladstone put upon us the income-tax, and increased our whisky duty with the result that a free gift of £4,000,000 cost us £50,000,000 or £60,000,000. That is a new way of paying old debts. If the Government mean that we shall be charged for this £12,000,000 and that we shall have to pay a perpetual rent-charge of one-eighth, I can only say that a graver and more serious proposition never emanated from the Treasury Bench.

Mr. RITCHIE dissented.

*Mr. T. M. HEALY: I am glad that the Chancellor of the Exchequer shakes his head, and I assume that a more reasonable course will be adopted and that something further will be put into the Bill. It may be that the Government have yet some further proposal dealing with this one-eighth, and I shall wait very patiently to see what is suggested. We pay our taxes the same as you do. and, further, we have never admitted that equal bargain of the Union as you now construe it; and even if we did, the promises which you made at the time of the Union have all been broken. At the present moment our contribution to the general fund out of which you maintain the Empire amounts to £10,000,000 per annum. The £12,000,000 which the Government is going to giv is only a very little more than one year's contribution which Ireland makes to this country. I do not grudge this money being given to the landlord for the sake of peace, and ending an ancient feud. If they can make any impresssion on the Government and get more they will have my hearty support, and I do not think any objection will be made from this part of the House. But there will be innumerable delays in getting this scheme of purchase on foot. You are dealing with 500,000 small holdings, and will have the question of titles mortgage, quit-rents, tenants for life, the remainder man and chargeants to settle, all of which must take up a considerable amount of time. I do not say that the Land Judges Court is a very swift method of procedure, because a Court which has to give one man's property to another must necessarily go slowly. If you put an estate into the Land Judges Court, the earliest period in which a title can be cleared and a sale effected is three years, the result being that they have not been able to digest £1,500,000 a year during the last eighteen years. I therefore think it is an almost extravagant hope that the right hon. Gentleman will be able to arrange to dispose of £5,000,000 in any one year for a considerable time to come. There is, however, one means by which the tenants of Ireland can get some satisfaction. As there must be delays, and as of course it would not be politic to disappoint the tenants, I suggest that the applications for these £12,000,000 should be limited to those owners who declare themselves ready to sell within the year after the Bill passes. I do not think that twelve months would be too long, because there are questions of trustees to consider, of landlords on the Continent or in Australia, and even of landlords who, strangely enough, cannot be found at all. But even if the Government provide that the applications shall be made within twelve months, every tenant in Ireland will know who is inclined to sell and who is not. At any rate, tenants who were going to get their farms would have additional peace of mind which would be desirable in the interests of the community.

I have been fairly long in this House—long enough to get tired of it—and I never before found any man getting a job that I was glad of until I heard the name of W. F. Bailey. He is a landlord, a Protestant, a Conservative and a Unionist, but he is a clear-headed man who knows the Irish system and knows the world from San Francisco to Bokhara. I would not take a mile off it. With regard to the other gentlemen, we have, of course, been constantly at war with Mr. Wrench, but, in all probability, he has learnt a great deal in the fourteen or fifteen years he has been in office. He is an Englishman who came over without very large experience to our country, who was very heartily abused, no doubt, but profited by it, and I notice of late has figured more largely on the Congested Districts Board than on the Land Commission. He is responsible for one thing—the introduction of the hackney strain of horses, which I do not think met with general approval. He will be better known for that by the public than as a Land Commissioner. But there must be a balance, and when you have on the one side a man who is supposed to be on the tenant side, you balance him by a man who is raddled and ear-marked on the other side. As regards Mr. Finucane, I place great weight on any recommendation Sir Anthony Macdonnell makes. I think his desire is to bring in a man who is substantially neutral, and who has had experience of a country which is in many parts even poorer than Ireland. Sometimes, however, these Indian officials bring too Oriental a view to a too Occidental situation. When Colonel McKerley was at the Board of Works in 1881, he was much abused. I was approached by the late Mr. Blake, who then sat for Waterford, and he said to me—

> "The Government are going to appoint an Indian general for Ireland—General Sankey; will you give me a written guarantee that you will hold your tongue about him for twelve months?"

We did. And at the end of that time Mr. Blake came to us and with a slight shake of his head and a slight stutter said—

> "Well, now, you can abuse Sankey as much as you like."

All I will say with regard to Mr. Finucane, I would give him the same period of grace and not abuse him for at least a year certain

There are great difficulties in facilitating purchase transactions, not merely in the question of title, but by reason of another interest—that of the agents. This is to be a voluntary Bill. Landlords in Ireland are not very clever—you see a lot of them sometimes in this House, and they are very largely in the hands of their agents. It is perfectly clear it cannot be in the interest of any Irish agent to lose his salary. Take the case of a lady living in England not acquainted with finance, whose agent writes over, "This Bill will ruin you. It is the worst measure ever passed for Ireland, and I advise you to hold on until a Liberal Government comes into office." In Ireland there is always some future Government which is going to settle everything. That power of agents and receivers, and the straits they will be in to avert loss of livelihood is a serious matter. In the case of the Huntingdon estate, the matter was delayed for three or four years by the bogus pretext of the agent that a loan was going to be raised from some imaginary English financier to clear off the whole mortgage. These men have to live the same as everybody else, but it appears to me if some of these £12,000,000 were to go to the agents instead of the landlords you would have much quicker land purchase. We remember how Mr. Goschen got through his great conversion scheme. He gave the honest broker 2s. 6d. per cent., and by that means every broker in the City advised his clients that there was nothing better in the world, and that 2¾ per cent. was far better than 3 per cent. In the same way, not that I have any love for them, but looking at the matter from the point of view of human nature and a desire to bring purchase into operation, I would urge the Government not to omit this question from their consideration. It argues well for the country and the position of affairs generally that this measure should receive the reception it has from the general body of the House, and that this great measure of appeasement should not be grudged to Ireland by a Conservative administration.

*Mr. WYNDHAM: I notice that no other Member has risen, and I feel the time has now come, not to reply, for that will hardly be expected of me, but to notice some of the questions that have been raised, and to repair some of the omissions in my speech. The hon. and learned Gentleman who sat down last referred to the fact that on the score of time I had probably deferred the explanation of some matters of secondary importance. It is true that I cut my speech shorter than I originally intended that it should be, because I felt I was putting before the House a mass of details that they could not assimilate. When food is not assimilated it does the body no good, and that is also true of Bills; if they are not understood at the moment it is no good hammering at provisions of secondary importance. Then the hon. and learned Gentleman referred to the eighth which will remain a perpetual rent-charge. So far from the Treasury profiting by that eighth, in respect of that eighth the Treasury is giving up a sinking fund; it is financing the loan on its own responsibility, without getting 10s. per cent. back from Ireland to redeem the advances. From the Treasury's point of view, it is, I think, a generous provision. Then the hon. and learned Member asked me whether I had accidentally omitted to say that at some future time, if not now, this eighth would be collected by, and, I presume, administered by some local bodies in Ireland. I have given a good deal of thought to some such project as that; and, speaking for myself—and I speak for no one else on this matter—I should like to see some such project carried out. I believe it would be a good project. I believe that it would be wise for local bodies in Ireland to collect some part of these instalments and hold them as a perpetual form of income, of course surrendering some of the grants given from this country in exchange. I think it would be a very sensible thing to do to interest local bodies in Ireland in land purchase. But this is a long Bill. I want this Bill to pass. I am afraid of overweighting it, and I have been persuaded to the belief that to bring anything in the nature of a Local Government Bill into this Bill would be to risk the loss of it. On matters of local government there is not that agreement between all parties in Ireland which, thank Heaven, there is now on the matter of land purchase; and had I persisted in bringing local bodies into this Bill, I might have thrown down a possible bone of contention between parties who are drawing so close together on the question of land purchase. If that is ever to be done, it must be done in the future, in a separate measure, on the responsibility of a Minister who feels it is safe to do it. It would not be safe, we think, to do it now—quite safe from the point of view of Ireland, but not safe from the point of view of this Bill. The eighth has nothing to do with the £12,000,000. It is an eighth of the money advanced, the total amount of which I estimate at about £100,000,000.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: What I suggested was that in return for the £12,000,000 you are making us pay a perpetual eighth of the entire bargain.

*Mr. WYNDHAM: There is no connection between the two. It will be for hon. Members to consider this proposal of a perpetual rent-charge. I gathered that the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Waterford said he considered we had good grounds for having something of the kind, but he reserved the right of considering whether our proposal was excessive. Most hon. Members have reserved their right of revising their opinion of the Bill, and in all fairness I must have the right to reserve my judgment on some of the points which have been raised. I do not think it would really be for the convenience of the House that I should start a ragged debate now, taking up one point and then another. I have taken notes of the points, and of the omissions detected in my statement, and to these I will give my best attention.

I ought to answer a specific question put to me by my hon. friend the Member for King's Lynn in regard to the finances of the Bill. He suggested that our proposal may mean an advance of a sum of £100,000,000 to Ireland. I think that is an outside estimate. It may turn out to be only £90,000,000. I am assured that it could not possibly be advanced in a less period than fifteen years. The hon. and learned Member who preceded me said he has good reason for saying that is a sanguine estimate, that we shall never be able to raise and advance more than £5,000,000 in any one year, even if we reach that amount. If fifteen years is a sanguine estimate from my point of view, it is a consoling estimate from the point of view of the City of London. My hon. friend asked me whether the £185,000 a year, upon which all the losses incidental to flotation would fall, will be put in the Estimates. It will not be in the Estimates; it will be in a Bill for reasons which I had better give when I introduce the Bill. It will be in the form of a perpetual grant to Ireland—I would rather not be drawn now into an explanation—as an equivalent for the grant to England under the Education Act last year. We hold that Ireland ought to get it, and we can discover no means by which she can get it unless we embody it in a Bill. The third point was in respect of the £390,000 a year. Yes, that will be in the Estimates. It is the maximum which can be reached in fifteen years if we take the most sanguine estimate of the pace at which we are likely to proceed. I would refer to the fact that we have been very economical in Ireland. There has been an increase of 18 per cent. on the Civil expenditure in England, but there has been a decrease of over 1 per cent. on Civil expenditure in Ireland; and there are other economies which will be instituted forthwith if this Bill finds favour with the House. They are based upon investigations which have already been conducted into the establishment of the police and of the Land Commission in Ireland. That further economy, estimated at a minimum of £250,000, will be perpetual, as against a temporary increase in the Estimates of £390,000 a year.

The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition asked me whether I would give the provisions as to subdivision. They are rather technical, and perhaps he will wait until I have the Bill. I hope it will be in the hands of Members to-morrow, or early on Friday. In the case of intestacy it is a difficult matter to deal with. We say no tenant purchaser is to mortgage his holding to a higher amount than ten times its valuation—that is about a third of its market price. But there is a danger in Ireland of persons dying without making wills, and then their holdings ought, of course, to be divided amongst the children equally. That involves a difficulty, and therefore the Land Commission can give leave to encumber the holding for a greater amount. I would not go further than that. Briefly, those are the lines on which we work. The Leader of the Opposition also asked me to go at greater length into the allocation of this aid grant. The £12,000,000 is the limit. We do not mean to go further than that. We might have said we estimate this problem at £4,000,000 and three years purchase. We might have said we will add 10 or 12 per cent. in every case; but we did not say so because, in our opinion, it would press more heavily on the small than on the large properties. We have said we will give 15 per cent. on £5,000 and under, and graduate it inversely when we come to estates of greater value. When we get to £20,000, an estate worth £800 a year, we add 10 per cent., and at £40,000 we give 5 per cent. That is the minimum, but it will be available in every case. In the Bill of last year there was a clause saying that the State would give such facilities as may be thought proper. This is in lieu of that and all other promises. The hon. Member for Louth said we should do better to allocate a part of this aid grant to the agents. We think that with this assistance the landlord ought to make proper provision for a trusted servant. We cannot provide in the Bill for the creation of a new hierarchy, and a large establishment of officials. The Estates Commissioners will work, so far as they can, through the agents and solicitors of Ireland. They may temporarily employ such persons to act under them. I think if land purchase lasts, as I am sure it will last, for fifteen years, there will be good work, and acceptable work, to be done by the best Irish agents over the whole of the country, and a good deal of money to be made out of it.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Are there any provisions for the labourers?

*MR. WYNDHAM: Yes, there are, but I did not mention them because I did not wish to weary the House with what is a very minor part of the Bill. There are three clauses relating to the labourers. I do not myself say that that is not a very important part of the Bill, for I feel sure that the labourers ought to be included, but compared with the financial magnitude of the proposals, which it was my first duty to explain to the House, these clauses deal with what, after all, are minor administrative reforms.

MR. SHEEHAN (Cork County, Mid): I think it would be of great advantage if we could have a statement with regard to the labourers clauses.

*MR. WYNDHAM: Time is going on, and I think the hon. Member might wait. It is not from any wish to spare myself that I ask this, but there are many hon. Members in the House who, I think, are getting rather tired of hearing the sound of my voice. The hon. Member will be able to read these three clauses in the next forty-eight hours, and I hope he will not think it necessary for me to go into them to-night.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth): I do not know whether my right hon. friend would think it proper to make any statement with respect to sporting rights.

*MR. WYNDHAM: We leave them under the existing law when it is so desired. We do not force a landlord to sell his sporting rights if he does not wish to sell them; but my hon. and gallant friend will see what we do with them when the Bill is in his hands.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: There is the question of the duties of the Land Commissioners.

*MR. WYNDHAM: As the area of Ireland is purchased, the necessity for the Land Commission diminishes, and certainly the necessity for some seventy temporary sub-commissioners ought to be diminished very rapidly, and, as they are appointed from year to year, we may look to them for a very effective source of economy. But, pending the adjudication upon the great number of outstanding appeals, and the necessity there must be for a judicial tribunal to determine all points of law, the three Land Commissioners will go on, at any rate, for the present. Whether it will be necessary to reappoint new ones in the event of a vacancy is a matter on which we will be better able to judge when we see whether this Bill succeeds, as I hope it may. I thank all hon. Members for the way in which they have received the Bill. I ask them to pass no hasty judgment upon it. Everyone has refrained from doing so; and that, I believe, is the best that any man, however sanguine, should have expected to befall this afternoon. I hope that when the Bill has been studied a judgment will be passed upon it, and that with the great majority in this House that judgment will be favourable. For the moment that must be an aspiration.

❀ Bill to amend the Law relating to the occupation and ownership of land in Ireland; and for other purposes relating thereto; and to amend the Labourers (Ireland) Acts, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Wyndham, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland.

IRISH LAND BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to the occupation and ownership of land in Ireland; and for other purposes relating thereto; and to amend the Labourers (Ireland) Acts," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday 22nd April, and to be printed. [Bill 121.]

COUNTY COUNCILS (BILLS IN PARLIAMENT) BILL.

Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Question [24th March], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) said he had no objection to this Bill being read a second time, the only thing that he would like to know was whether Scotland could not be included. The reason he asked for the inclusion of Scotland was that both the Scotch and the English law were exactly the same, and therefore if any Bill gave particular powers in the case of England it would naturally follow that the same course should be adopted with regard to Scotland.

LORD EDMUND FITZMAURICE (Wiltshire, Cricklade) said he hoped the Second Reading of this Bill would be allowed to pass. It was a Bill which had been most anxiously desired for many years by the County Councils of England, and they ought to be thankful to the right hon. Gentleman for having taken the case up in the manner in which he had. He had only one word to say with regard to the Bill itself, and that was on the second clause with regard to local enquiry and notice to the overseers. He thought that clause was unnecessary. He could not help thinking that the appearance on the County Councils of a representative of any district must be sufficient protection against any one district of the Council being unduly charged, and he thought they might rely on the representatives of the parishes in the county to defend those parishes against any job that might be attempted to be perpetrated. But rather than lose the Bill he would accept the clause. As he understood, the reason for the Government insisting on this clause was that they thought there ought to be special protection given to the ratepayers, and if the Government pressed the point he should offer no opposition to it. In regard to the question raised by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid. Lanark, he could not help thinking that neither Ireland nor Scotland was prejudiced by not being inserted in this Bill, because both could use the Bill as an argument for its future extension to those countries. If it was thought the Bill should be made general, then there could be an instruction to insert Ireland or Scotland, or both. He did not object to that, but he asked that neither Scotland nor Ireland should be allowed to stand in the way of this Bill becoming law this year.

MR. BUCHANAN (Perthshire, E.) said the Scotsmen had no desire to prejudice the passage of the English Bill. All they wanted was the inclusion of Scotland, and he did not think that would in any way prejudice the measure. The object of his rising was to ask whether the Government were prepared to accept an instruction to the Committee to make the Bill apply to Scotland.

*MR. HENRY HOBHOUSE (Somersetshire, E.) said that he hoped that the proposed extension of the Bill to Scotland would not prevent this country from getting the reform which it had desired for the last fifteen years. Nothing could be more absurd than the present law, which denied to the largest County Council powers which had long been granted to every small town. At present County Councils had to promote Bills at the risk of a few individuals. Such a state of things required immediate remedy.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. WALTER LONG, Bristol, S.) thought it might be convenient if he stated the position of the Government with regard to the extension of this Bill to Scotland and to Ireland. As President of the Local Government Board he was only responsible for legislation for England and Wales, but he had promised the hon. Member for Mid. Lanark that he would consider whether this Bill could be made general. The difficulty in regard to Scotland was not the same as that with regard to Ireland. He would be happy to consult with his right hon. friends the Chief Secretary and the Lord Advocate as to the possibility of similiar powers being granted in Ireland and Scotland.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Law, etc.

BERWICKSHIRE COUNTY TOWN BILL.

Read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

BOROUGH FUNDS BILL.

Read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Law, etc.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (TRANSFER OF POWERS) BILL.

Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Question [9th March], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) said the object of this Bill was to transfer certain important powers from the Local Government Board to the County Councils. This matter was one that was raised in the Local Government Bill of 1888. The transfer of these powers was inserted in that Bill, but was afterwards withdrawn, and the matter was left to the Local Government Board, who might apply for a transfer of the powers to the Local Authorities. In 1889 the Local Government Board made a provisional order under the Act of 1888 for the transfer to the County Councils of certain powers; and a confirming Bill was introduced and referred to a Select Committee of this House. That Bill received considerable opposition from the non-county boroughs, and the result was that it was withdrawn. That was the position in 1889, but the matter did not end there. In 1897 an attempt was made by the County Council of Yorkshire to obtain a transfer of powers and again an enquiry was held, with the result that for the third time these powers were refused, and the Bill was again withdrawn. The objections of the non-county boroughs were that they would be put under the authority of County Councils, an authority which they recognised was no more independent or important in its own sphere than were the non-county borough councils themselves; that questions of difference would arise between the urban and rural elements of the counties and that the tribunal to decide those questions should be the Local Government Board, and not the County Councils on account of the conflicting interests with which they would have to deal. The County Councils did not want these powers. They had lately had new powers imposed upon them by the Education Act, and were already overburdened with their increased duties, and now it was proposed to transfer to them duties, not of an administrative, but a judicial character. Those were the objections which the non-county boroughs had to the Bill. They objected to being placed under the authority of the County Councils in matters seriously affecting their interests. He had no objection to the Bill itself because it was an English Bill, and he had no concern in it. He had only intervened because the parliamentary agents of the non-county boroughs had placed the position before him, and he thought under the circumstances it should not be read a second time without a discussion being raised upon it.

*SIR FRANCIS POWELL (Wigan) said he could not help feeling that the non-county boroughs were quite able to fight their own battles. He had been largely concerned with local government, and he was of opinion that there were no more powerful bodies in this country than the non-county boroughs. He had no doubt that when this Bill was read a second time and sent to a Committee, the non-county boroughs would be found quite competent to fight their own battle and allocate their own course. He was glad to see this Bill which he thought had been too long delayed.

MR. BRIGG (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley) said that the County Councils were of opinion that it would be a most desirable thing if these powers were delegated to them. There had been objections raised to these proposals on former occasions, but when he had examined the statements of those who objected he had never been able to find any real ground for opposing the passage of the Bill. He therefore had great pleasure in supporting the second reading.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs) was glad the hon. Member for Mid Lanark did not intend to press his objections further. There was general agreement on both sides of the House with regard to the matter, and speaking for the Welsh councils he could say there was a keen desire that the Bill should be carried through. The opposition of certain districts in England a few years ago had the effect of preventing the Local Government Board putting something of the same sort into operation then, and doubtless in some counties the same difficulty still existed. But there were large tracts of country, especially in Wales, where the non-county boroughs did not object to this proposal, and as the Bill proposed to give the Local Government Board power to deal with certain counties in which that difficulty did not arise, he hoped it would go through.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. WALTER LONG, Bristol, S.) said the remarks which had been made were doubtless correct so far as the past history of the Bill was concerned, but it had been overlooked that the present Bill sought only to enable the Local Government Board to do with regard to one county or a set of counties what hitherto they could do only with regard to the country as a whole. Action would be taken by means of Provisional Order, so that the position of the non-county boroughs would be in no way damnified by the Bill.

Sir ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.) pointed out that the Bill perpetuated the distinction between county and non-county boroughs which in practice had often worked badly and created much friction. Although the Bill only gave power to deal with a particular county, it should be borne in mind that this might be a dangerous method of proceeding if the general principle was objected to. It might be comparatively easy to take such a step in a particular instance without provoking much opposition, whereas if the step were proposed to be taken generally the non-county boroughs would be able to combine, and thus be better able to resist changes to which they might object. The Bill was at present under the consideration of the Municipal Corporations Association, and when the measure next came before the House Amendments would probably be moved. In the meantime he was not disposed, if he were able to do so, to resist the progress of the Bill, but it seemed to be a tactical movement, calculated to carry out *seriatim* what might be regarded as objectionable.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Law, etc.

And there being no further Business set down for the Afternoon Sitting, Mr. Speaker left the Chair until the Evening's Sitting.

EVENING SITTING.

ARMY ENLISTMENTS.

Mr. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.) said the Motion which stood in his name on the Paper was slightly different in form to that in which it originally stood. That was due to the fact that since yesterday the whole question of enlistment had been materially altered by the issue of the War Office Memorandum, which had been welcomed by every military reformer both in and outside the House. His object in bringing forward this Motion was to strengthen and reinforce the hands of the Secretary of State for War in completing the work that he had commenced by the issue of that Memorandum, in obtaining a satisfactory class of men to uphold the prestige of the Army. Many of our difficulties would become infinitely more simplified, by the concession of the Secretary of State for War in admitting inquiries as to character to be made on enlistment of recruits. If such inquiries could be made, this Motion was only another step in completing the work of ascertaining correctly the age and qualifications of the men who offered to enlist.

The Inspector-General, in his Report of this year, had stated that the one subject which created anxiety at the present moment was the deterioration of the physique of recruits. That was not only a serious thing for the Army, but a still more serious question for the nation, and therefore the question was transformed from a purely military into a national question. The percentage of rejections of the ordinary recruits who submitted themselves for examination was, according to the Inspector's Report, shown to be increasing; in 1900 the percentage was 27·4, in 1901, 29·04, and in 1902, 32·22. Those figures, however, did not show the whole of the rejections, because they were taken from the numbers of men who had been allowed to offer themselves for medical examination; 80,000 men were not allowed to take that preliminary step. The waste of the Army was enormous. It was idle to compare our standard with that of any Continental standard, because when conscription was in force, and all had to serve, the physically unfit were drafted into shops and stores, turned into artificers, clerks and hospital orderlies, of which large military Powers required three or four times as many as we ourselves, and, therefore, to compare our standard with that of a continental Power would be misleading.

He would leave the question of the physique of our recruits to other hon. Members more qualified to deal with it, but would deal with the question of wastage, and the main cause of it, which, he thought, was our false system of enlistment.

Last year 8,800 men were discharged as invalids, 1,600 as men not likely to become efficient soldiers, 400 for making false answers, 2,900 for misconduct, and 8,000 for miscellaneous reasons not returned. If to those figures was added the net amount of the desertions, it gave a total of 25,000, and if the desertions from the Militia were included, 34,000 men—the loss of whose services laid a large debt on the Army, and a large charge on the Exchequer. A great number of these undesirable and worthless recruits had been the result of the false system under which they had been taken into the ranks, which allowed boys of fourteen years of age to join the Army. The present system of inducing these boys to become soldiers was not worthy of a great nation. Upon the attestation paper there was a direct inducement for these boys to make false statements, and not to tell the truth. Eighteen questions were put to the recruit, which he had to answer before he was attested. As to the first six he was not warned of the penalty he incurred for making a false answer, and among those questions was the most important one, "What is your age?" Before the seventh question the recruit was warned that if he gave a false answer he would be subject to two years' imprisonment, and certainly Question 4, "What is your age?" should be placed in the category in which punishment should follow a false answer. If the law was properly enforced it gave the right to punish a person for any false answer he might give, because Sections 33 and 99 of the Army Act clearly laid that down. But the law was a dead letter. All hon. Members would admit that a false entry into life by a boy in this way might have a most serious effect upon his career, character and life.

It had been said on other occasions, both by the Secretary of State and the noble Lord the Financial Secretary to the War Office, that recruits could not be sent to tropical climates until they had had two years service, and until they were twenty years of age. If that were so, why were these boys who enlisted at fourteen and fifteen, after two years' service, sent out to India at the ages of seventeen and eighteen? The life of a cantonment in India could not be otherwise than dangerous to young men, but it was absolutely fatal to the frame of boyhood, and nobody who had seen the hospital ships coming back from India, with soldier after soldier ruined for life from the fact that he had had to submit to the temptations and evils of Indian life with only a boy's frame and a boy's mind, could rest until he had tried to remedy this blot upon our system. In addition to the 9,000 men discharged as invalids last year there were 4,000 deaths in the Army, and many of those deaths would have been averted, and there would have been many less invalids, if these young fellows had not been sent to India until they were twenty years of age

With regard to the Home force it was not fair to the officers and men to ask them to have to deal with men of whose ages they could not be certain. They had to inflict punishments, and those punishments should be inflicted according to the capacity of the person punished to bear them, and it was wrong to expect a boy to do the work of a man, and to withstand temptation, unless he had a man's frame and a man's mind. Battles now had to be fought often at break of day after long marches and on an empty stomach, and unless they had men in the Army such work could not be done. Therefore, it was essential that the age should be truly given by a recruit entering the Army. The authorities of a public school knew the ages of the pupils, but all that the Government had done in this matter was to adopt a *non-possumus* attitude. Why was it impossible to obtain the correct age and character? In every arsenal and dockyard there was a certificate of age, character and physique of every man employed; at every board school the age of every pupil was known; and even the military authorities themselves pretended they could obtain certificates of age, because in the Army circular issued yesterday they had asked not only the year but the month! He did not wish the Government to be held down to a hard and fast rule in this matter. He only asked that the regulations should be enforced wherever possible. That left a loophole for those who wished to hide their identity and did not desire their antecedents to be too closely enquired into. He congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on what he had done, which had constituted one of the greatest improvements that could be made with regard to enlistment, and at the same time he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be able to make some concession on the lines he had now suggested. He begged to move.

Mr. PEEL (Manchester, S.): In seconding the Motion said this was one of those questions upon which the opinion of the civilian Members ought to be fully heard in this House, as it was one of those questions upon which civilian opinion had and must have a much wider range than military opinion. His object in supporting the Motion was to strengthen, if it were possible, the Secretary of State for War in the good work the right hon. Gentleman had already done in his determination to raise the standard and qualification and age with regard to enlistment in the Army. There could be no doubt that public opinion on this question had been thoroughly aroused, and great interest was taken in it. People might not understand the technicalities of the matter, but they clearly understood that what they required for the money they paid was a proper article suited to the needs for which it was destined, and there was a general consensus of opinion that if the right hon. Gentleman would adopt some of that enlightened opportunism which had been spoken of in the House he would, in his endeavour to raise the standard of the Army, have the unanimous and unfailing support of the opinion of the country behind him. He submitted that no comparison could be made between the standard of our Army and that of Continental nations. In countries where the principle of conscription obtained, it was necessary to make the standard as easy and as low as possible, because the Army in that case was for home defence, and if it were not fighting in its own country it would have to fight in one the climatic character of which was not dissimilar to its own, and therefore it would be possible in a case of that kind to take men whose strength and physical attributes were not sufficient to bear the storm of every climate of the world. If any comparison was made it must not be with the standard of the armies of France or Germany as constituted for home defence, but with such a force as Germany collected for service in China; and if it was desired to find an Army which was at all comparable to ours we must go to Holland, where the Army was organised to some extent on the same lines as our own.

This change in raising the standard of height and age constituted a great innovation in the system of the Army, and he could quite imagine persons who had lived under the old system seeing no reason for the change, and pointing out that we still had the class of men who served under Wellington or followed Colin Campbell to Lucknow. But in the last 100 years a great change had come over this country. The old system sixty years ago took men with a less rigid examination than they were subject to at present, but at that time two-thirds of the people of this country lived on the land and one-third in the towns. Now three-quarters lived in the towns and one-quarter in the country, and that brought us face to face with a totally different standard of men from those who joined the Army then. Under modern conditions we had to look for a better and higher class of men, able to stand greater strain and greater labour than was sustained by men who fought in India fifty years ago. A greater strain was put on the physique and intelligence of the soldier of to-day. We had now to develop the intelligence of the individual; under modern conditions a soldier had to depend on his own intelligence and fight on his own initiative in a way he had never had to do before. It was not sufficient now to have the scalliwag and undesirable; we must now apply to a higher class of man in order to cope with the greater strain which would be put, not only on his physique, but on his intelligence. The change made by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War had made further demands upon us, because he now asked, not for the 25,000 recruits annually that were required twenty years ago, but 50,000, and if we were going to get 50,000 we must apply to a class far different to that on which we had hitherto relied. We should have, he contended, to study the distinctions and prejudices of class and how far class distinctions were involved in our social system, and we had also to consider the feelings and prejudices of the parents, who might strongly object to their children being sent to associate with people whom they did not like them to meet with in ordinary life. He had found, in spite of the changes that had been made in the Army, a strong objection on the part of parents to send their children into the Army. They said they were sending them there to learn bad habits, and they would not send their sons anywhere where they risked being corrupted. That was the kind of sentiment and prejudice which the right hon. Gentleman had to get over and destroy. A great improvement had been made in the conditions of service in the Army, in pay and in pension, but the very changes which the right hon. Gentleman had introduced had given us the right to demand a different and better class of men than that which was required when the Army was organised on the old system.

He contended that the present system under which recruiting returns were considered in the War Office was a direct premium on these false balance-sheets. How were the officers and the sergeants at the recruiting depôts judged? They were judged largely on the results they produced—whither they had got a long list of recruits. If one man sent in 1,000 recruits, and another, a conscientious man, said he could only produce 500 first-rate recruits, how could they exactly compare the class of recruits gathered together in one district with those gathered together in another district? The tendency of the present method was to take the number rather than the quality of the recruits. What wonder was it then that, in spite of the desires of the Secretary for War and the opinion of this House, those recruiting agents who honestly tried to get the best men they could should have recourse, when the recruiting season was coming to an end, to those persons who threw such discredit on the Army? What wonder was it that any trousered thing was taken? What wonder was it that the doctors should less severely scan the arch of the instep, or the hollow tooth, and were ready to believe that a few weeks of military training and good food would fill up the narrow chest? It was against all this that the Secretary for War should be continually fighting. It was so easy to take the number of recruits as the test of the efficiency of the recruiting officer. They were all grateful to the Secretary of State for War for all that he had done in reference to character, but he thought that the Secretary for War had spoken in some ways rather disparagingly of the kind of character required for our recruits. The right hon. Gentleman said truly enough that he did not want a Sunday School army for recruits. He did not take any absolute or pedantic rule for the character of the recruits; all he wanted was a practical test. Men should not be enlisted for service in the Army with whom their comrades would be ashamed to associate. He was not going to say that we ought to enlist angels, but he wanted to have men of a good class and the highest character. He was glad to notice that in Manchester, one of the Divisions of which he represented, a better class had been going into the Army than formerly, but he was met with this difficulty: parents said "I should like my son to embrace a military career for a few years, but I do not like the men with whom he would have to associate." He knew from experience in the Yeomanry that one or two men might alter the whole character of a squadron or a company.

There was another matter which had a bearing on the question of character and the class of men enlisted for the Army. It was often very difficult for a man discharged from the Army to obtain employment, and it was very sad to notice that numbers of these men found their way to the police court. What was that due to? It was due to the prejudice on the part of employers against these men. Destroy that prejudice, and make it clear to the country that a better class of men were enlisted, and the whole attitude of the employers of labour towards the Reservists would be changed The experiment of asking would-be recruits for certificates of character and of examining into the character of the men had recently been tried in the Royal Marines. That body consisted of 20,000 men, and he was quite aware that a comparison between them and the general Army was, perhaps, hardly fair, because they were a picked body. That had always been the case; but in 1901 a standard of character was introduced into the Royal Marines, and the most extraordinary change had come over that body. The percentage of criminal wastage was always low, but for the six months after this further inquiry into character had been instituted the wastage was reduced by no less than 50 per cent. There was no reason why similar results should not be reached in the Army at large.

As to the question of age, he thought that that inquiry should be a little stiffer and sterner than before. The question had become ten-fold more important since the recent changes had been introduced into the Army. The Army Corps were to be sent abroad to fight, and everybody knew that a man should not be sent abroad until he was twenty years of age. That standard had not been adopted frivolously or for no reason, but because any man under twenty years of age was less capable of meeting the hardships of foreign service or foreign warfare than a man over that age. It was therefore becoming increasingly important that the men enlisted for the Army should be not less than eighteen years of age. They were told that there was some difficulty in ascertaining the age. He was quite well aware that some men did not know their age, and others were unable to produce their birth certificates. The Secretary for War lived in the county of Surrey, where the vision was not disturbed by a vast array of smoking chimneys, but those who lived in the North knew that this matter of age was a problem which had to be faced in every factory. There everybody knew how complex was the system for the protection of children and young people of various ages, and how important it was to know precisely what the age was of the young persons employed. What was done by the manufacturers in the North—done, indeed, under penalties—might be perfectly well done in recruiting for the Army. It was not enough to look to the general physique of a man; one might be deceived readily that way, and the development of a man might not be a sufficient test of the endurance he could display in foreign service and in foreign wars. But he maintained that it was possible in most cases to obtain a certificate of birth, or at any rate to make more accurate inquiries than had ever been done hitherto for ascertaining the age of recruits.

These were the principal points on which his hon. friend and himself had submitted the Resolution to the House. They had been well met on the question of character by the Secretary for War, and the recent Army Order had been very reasonably and well drawn, but they wanted something done with this question of age. They also asked that the standard of physique should be made rather more stern and stiff than before. These were matters which commended themselves to the country, which was taking more interest at the present moment than ever before in the question of getting value for their money. That was a matter which had been most keenly discussed. It was not a matter of party at all. In this House party divisions were kept up through the sessions of Parliament, but in the country, except at election times, this antagonism did not exist. Men went about their ordinary business, and formed a good, ordinary, common-sense opinion on these matters which no Minister could possibly disregard. If the Secretary of State for War could meet them on this point he would meet the average sane, common-sense opinion of a large proportion of the people of this country; and if he did so he would do something which would give greater satisfaction than anything he had yet done. He would place his Army on firm and solid foundations; he would earn a reputation which would be as great as that of any of his predecessors; and he would enjoy the satisfaction, sincere, profound, and lasting, and as attractive and agreeable to himself as the sonorous tramp of all his Army Corps, or the nice equipoise of his linked battalions.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House, while welcoming the recent War Office Memorandum regarding the character of recruits, is of opinion that, in order to adequately fit the British soldier for his duties at home and abroad, greater efforts should be made and precautions taken to secure a higher standard of physique of recruits accepted; and that as regards age a birth certificate or other reliable evidence should, wherever possible, be required; no man being accepted or retained who is known or believed to be under the age of eighteen years."—(*Mr. Pirie.*)

MR. PRIESTLEY (Grantham) said that the few remarks which he wished to make with the indulgence of the House would be specifically directed to one part of the Motion, and that was the question of the physique of the recruits. He did not wish in any way to indicate any lack of appreciation of the value of our recruits, or what was termed character. So far as the formation of character was concerned, he was not sure that it was in the power of the House of Commons or of any Government department to make any great development; but it was in the power of the State and of Government departments to create a very great and radical change in regard to the physique of the recruits. He believed that it was universally admitted in England that the alteration in our economic condition was producing a very serious result in the condition of the physique of the people of this country. It was inevitable that it should be so. The favourable and healthy conditions of country life have produced in England one of the finest race of men in the history of the nations for stamina and determination; but during the last few generations there had been a great change, which was producing results that demanded the attention of those who had the power to deal with the matter. The question of recruiting was one that affected not only men of eighteen years of age, because the physique of the individual was formed long before that age was reached. The higher classes had opportunities of getting proper physical training, but the great masses of the people had been neglected in this matter. It was not the occasion for any wholesale criticism of our system of national education, but he often thought that the mental and intellectual powers of children would have been considerably benefited if we had introduced into our board schools and national schools a system of scientific physical education, to enable them to make the best of their physique during the most susceptible period of their growth. It was not a question which it was either difficult or impossible to deal with. Other countries, Sweden particularly, had for years realised the necessity of cultivating the physique of the youth of the nation as a matter of national importance, just as in this country it was considered necessary to deal with their intellectual and mental powers. During the late war a deplorably large number of recruits had to be rejected on account of varied physical imperfections.

*MR. SPEAKER: I think the discussion of the question of physical education in schools is going beyond the scope of this Motion.

MR. PRIESTLEY said he quite appreciated that ruling. He would just say that the object of his remarks to show that unless we had a national system of physical education we could not get the best class of recruits—men who were capable of fulfilling the duties they were called upon to perform. We must get the best raw material we could, and we must improve it as much as we could. The tendency now was for the raw material to decline in power from generation to generation. He hoped the military authorities would associate themselves with the education authorities for the purpose of instituting a national system of physical education entirely independent of any form of military training, but based upon a foundation of physiological demands and applied by specialised and scientific methods.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Lord STANLEY, Lancashire, Westhoughton) said that in listening to the hon. Member for South Manchester he thought he discovered the real reason why the Motion was brought forward. The hon. Member stated that the opportunities for private Members speaking were so few that no opportunity should be lost. He did not know whether to congratulate the hon. Member on having got the opportunity of speaking, or to condole with him for having to deliver a rather belated speech, because, if he might say so, almost all the questions put forward had, as the House would admit, already been dealt with by his right hon. friend the Secretary of State for War in a generous fashion. It had been urged that our recruits should be men of good character, and of good physique, and that they should not be accepted under age. With regard to character, he did not think anybody could go further than his right hon. friend had done. The questions which were now to be asked regarding candidates for enlistment, were these—

> "(1) In what capacity have you known So-and-so? (2) How long have you known him? (3) What time has elapsed since you last saw him to speak to? (4) What do you know of his character? Is he sober, honest, and respectable? (5) Has he, to your knowledge, served in the Army, Navy, Royal Marines, Militia, Yeomanry, or Volunteers? and if so, please state which; and (6) Is he married or single? If a widower, state number of children, if any.

He thought the questions which were put constituted a good investigation into a man's past life. Nobody could contend that, if honestly answered, they were not broad enough to exclude from the Army the undesirable characters who had obtained entrance to it hitherto. He quite agreed with his hon. friend that one or two undesirable men might absolutely contaminate a whole regiment. In addition, power was reserved to the commanding officer to strike a man out of the battalion if he should think him undesirable.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham) asked whether that power could be exercised by commanding officers without reference to the War Office.

Lord STANLEY said he did not think they had to refer to the War Office. His impression was that they had only to notify the War Office if this had been done. He was speaking, however, without actually knowing, and he should only confuse the House if he made a definite statement. On the question of physique he felt considerable interest, for he was once a special, and could not fulfil the weight qualification—an objection which drill and good food had removed. Certainly his right hon. friend would prevent the enlistment of recruits with under-development of chest or physical deformity; the standard would not be diminished. On the question of age some discretion must be allowed. The age was marked on the inquiry sheet, and the person supplying facts as to character could correct it if the age was mis-stated. If, however, a man fulfilled all requirements, if he was fit to take all duties of a man of the required age, it should not be necessary to sacrifice that man because it could be proved he was a few months under regulation age. Physical development must be the ruling qualification, but the recruiting officer should not be bound to get a birth certificate. His right hon. friend would undertake that every effort should be made to keep out of the Army those youthful recruits to whom allusion had been made. His right hon. friend had endeavoured to meet the wishes of hon. Members to the fullest extent; he had done more than any other man to raise the standard of the Army in character and physique; and with regard to age he, while as far as possible only taking recruits up to age, must be allowed some discretion to retain a man who, though below age, was in development equal or superior to other men a few months his seniors.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE (Bristol, E.) said that the concluding words of the noble Lord would lead one to think that the Secretary of State for War was willing to accept the Motion.

Lord STANLEY: No.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE said he understood then that the Secretary of State for War was not willing to accept it. If that was so what became of the remark that this was a belated discussion? There was no proposal before the House to reduce the Vote for the Army, and surely advantage might be taken of the present opportunity to discuss the question of recruiting without casting any reflection upon the Minister of that Department.

He ventured to say that this was not a belated discussion. On the contrary, the Motion afforded an opportunity for the discussion of a question of principle in which all who were interested in the Army might unite in pressing on the Minister concerned the views which they thought essential to the welfare of the Army. The circular emanating from the War Office yesterday was satisfactory so far as it went, but such divergent views had been expressed by the right hon. Gentleman from time to time that they could not afford to accept his *ipse dixit* on the matter. They must get, if they could, a definite Resolution of the House on the matter.

The noble Lord has just referred to a very important matter, namely, the power of commanding officers to get rid of undesirable characters in the Army. His hon. friend the Member for Fareham did not seem to take the same view as the noble Lord. He could assert without fear of contradiction that in cases of that sort, so rarely was the consent of the War Office given that the general officer commanding in almost every case sent an undesirable man to the district Court-martial for the purpose of getting rid of him. [Mr. BRODRICK shook his head.] He spoke from experience, and he knew the practice was as he had stated. Referring to what was sometimes done by magistrates in recommending persons brought before them to go into the Army and recover the character which they had lost, the hon. Member said he objected to the Army being regarded as the dumping-ground for criminals of the lesser sort. There was one point with regard to which the noble Lord was very reticent. The noble Lord the Financial Secretary had said a great deal about the physical standard required for recruits. On page 8 of the Inspector-General's Report reference was made to a Committee appointed last year to lay down the physical requirements for the future, and it was there stated that "as a result of experiments, a system was adopted," but not a word was mentioned as to the nature of the system, the evidence upon which it was adopted, or the way in which it would ameliorate present conditions. The Report also stated that the Inspector-General required a minimum chest measurement, but there was no indication as to what that minimum was. Why could not the Secretary of State or the Financial Secretary depart from this reticence and be a little frank with the House? They desired to know whether the standard had really been raised, whether the report was a real and genuine report—he did not suggest it was not—and whether there were any foundations for the congratulations addressed to the Secretary of State by the Financial Secretary on the excellent work the right hon. Gentleman was doing for recruiting in the Army.

He passed next to the question in which he was more directly interested, and that was whether the noble Lord would make some inquiry into the physical condition of the drafts sent lately to South Africa. The noble Lord, in reply to a question, said that perhaps they were not aware that there was no limit of age as regards drafts for South Africa, and, therefore, drafts were despatched as soon as possible, South Africa being considered a suitable training-ground for young soldiers. He had asked whether recruits of seventeen or eighteen were sent out there, and the reply was that recruits were sent out now just as they were sent to the home battalions, with the view of seeing whether they would continue the system. But that was not the answer which the Secretary of State gave some time before, because on March 19th he said nothing about recruits of seventeen or eighteen. Speaking of these special enlistments, he said:—

> "We do not treat them as boys, and we do not count them as fit or eligible to go abroad."

How could the right hon. Gentleman reconcile his answer in debate on March 19th with the answer deliberately given across the floor of the House on March 23rd?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): I do not recognise the quotation of the hon. Member, but undoubtedly the words "go abroad" were used in the sense of going to India or on active service.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE: We really ought to have a dictionary of the terminology of the War Office. "Abroad" is not in South Africa or the Mediterranean apparently.

Mr. BRODRICK: I hope the hon. Member will not press this. I do not know where he gets the quotation from about going abroad.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE: My authority was *The Times* newspaper, quoting a speech of the right hon. Gentleman on March 19th.

Mr. BRODRICK: *The Times* newspaper, which is usually more than accurate, is mistaken as to the remarks I made. I particularly stated, when somebody asked me about it, that it referred to India or going on active service.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE said, of course, it was very difficult for hon. Members, when they endeavoured to interpret a speech of a Minister, if they were met with a declaration that a verbatim report in *The Times* newspaper was not accurate. He should like to have it made perfectly clear what the term "abroad" meant, so that the House could judge of the conditions to which boys of seventeen or eighteen might be subjected when they enlisted. Then, to go a little further back, the right hon. Gentleman stated on March 14th, 1902, that no men were sent by us to the colonies not properly trained. A different system was now in vogue, because it was stated that recruits of seventeen and eighteen were sent to South Africa for the purposes of training. He wanted a clear definition from the War Office. Did they or did they not mean to send these boys, these children, abroad as representative soldiers of this country? Were they to be trained before they went abroad, or were they to go abroad for the purpose of being properly trained? Those were plain and straightforward questions to which he hoped the Secretary of State would reply.

Another instance of the difficulty of reconciling the answers of the Secretary of State occurred during the war in connection with the Imperial Yeomanry. When the second contingent of that force were being recruited, the Opposition described the recruits as "riff-raff and worthless," while the hon. and gallant Member for the Chelmsford Division went so far as to call them "corner-boys." The right hon. Gentleman then declared that Members had no right so to describe these recruits, because, as a matter of fact, they were yeomen. But a little later, when it was found that this force had become a sort of ambulatory depôt for the Boers, the Secretary of State said they were "raw, inexperienced lads." Would the recruits who were to bring characters from their previous employment undergo a similar transformation? In each of these cases he had quoted from *Hansard*. These irreconcilable descriptions were constantly being given.

Mr. BRODRICK said there was a great difference between speaking favourably of the class of men who came forward, and then, when speaking of their conduct in South Africa, admitting that they were not fully trained. As he said at the time, they were sent out in consequence of Lord Kitchener's desire to have the men on the spot.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE said that here again he found it somewhat difficult to reconcile the "yeomen who could ride and shoot" with the "raw, inexperienced lads," who, as one hon. Member described them, were unable to distinguish one end of their rifles from the other.

Mr. BRODRICK begged the hon. Member to be a little more accurate. He denied ever having said that the Members of the second levy of Yeomanry were yeomen in the sense of having belonged previously to the Yeomanry force. They were 15,000 in number, while the whole Yeomanry were only 11,000.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE said that if the right hon. Gentleman doubted the accuracy of his quotations he would be happy to supply the dates and references, and, if the quotations were inaccurate, to apologise for having made them. There was a great desire on the part of all sections of the House to do something for the physical equipment of the recruit. A Committee had recently reported upon physical training in Scotland, and made valuable suggestions which he hoped the Secretary of State would be able to do something to forward. It was quite possible that the failing physical equipment of some of the classes of the country might be stimulated and renovated by greater care of the children, and the recent circular issued by the Board of Education, more or less was the connivance or under the authority and at the suggestion of the War Office, although in some parts it went beyond the mark and in others was defective, contained the foundation for valuable assistance in the gradual building up of the muscle and strength of the children of the country. In order to get a better class of recruit, the recruiting houses should be removed from the squalid surroundings in which they were too often situated, so that respectable men would be able to go to a respectable house and offer to the State those services which at present were not available because the men would not go into low and disreputable quarters to offer them. He would also suggest more supervision of recruiting agents' methods. The worst recruiting officer was the recruit who had been deceived, while the best was the man who was able to go back to his relations and declare that all the conditions held out to him had been fulfilled to the very letter. If the War Office would only attend to some of the remarks and suggestions of their own recruiting agents and of the Inspector-General of Recruiting, he had no doubt they would secure the class of recruit they desired.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, Chelmsford) hoped the Government would be able to accept some of the excellent suggestions made by the hon. Member for North Aberdeen, who was an expert in this matter and had given much time to its study. The difficulty in recruiting had not been to discover the accurate age or the religious conviction of the recruits, but to get the men at all. A writer in *The Times* had said perfectly truly that there was no royal road to recruiting, and had suggested that the only way to get recruits was to pay them better and give them short service. To those suggestions he would venture to add a third—namely, to take a lesser number. The Government had endeavoured to give them short service, and, as the hon. Member for Fareham had often pointed out, the United States had tried the plan of paying the men better. As to taking fewer men, it seemed to him there was no doubt that, when the Reserve reached its normal figure, they would be able considerably to reduce the number of men with the Colours and to have fewer men at £60 a year and a larger number of men in the Reserve at £9 a year. Perhaps the House would permit him to recall the physique of the Army in the Crimean days. The Army then consisted of about 90,000 men, and according to Lord Haliburton's book the number of recruits was only about 7,000 a year. The result was that when this country sent 27,000 men to the Crimea, in point of physique they were the finest Army that ever left the shores of England. On the other hand, in the year when the abnormally large number of 91,000 presented themselves for service, because of the large number that were required to be sent out of the country, 29,000 were sent back by the doctors, 6,000 absconded, and 14,000 deserted before the end of the first year. They were now getting a very fair class of recruit in Essex, and Sir William Gatacre had recently stated that the recruits coming into the Suffolk battalion were of good quality, and that they were getting more than they knew what to do with. The reason for this was the improvements which had been suggested and carried through by the War Office during the last eighteen months, and if that policy was continued he had no doubt the authorities would be able to pick and choose, and get the class of men the country desired. If the rations of the recruits were improved that would go a long way, as there was no doubt that the way to a man's heart was through his stomach.

* MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) said there were some parts of the Motion he could support heartily, but others he desired to criticise. If it was possible to get a high standard of character in the Army, he did not object to it; and if the production of a birth certificate would help to make a good soldier and develop his chest measurement he would also be in favour of that. But they might try for too high a standard of character, and fail to get it. It was not altogether so necessary as some hon. Members thought. The employers of labour generally managed to conduct the industry and commerce of this country exceedingly well without insisting on any of the long rigmarole of questions which were now addressed with regard to recruits. Characters would not im

prove the physique or the *morale* of the Army to the extent that hon. Members below the Gangway seemed to suppose. Speaking as one who knew industrial and workshop life fairly well, he might say that it was the invariable rule of sensible and shrewd employers to engage men disproportionate to the number of testimonials they brought, because the more testimonials the worse the workman, and the more parson's testimonials the greater duffer the man was. It was also an error to assume that education and moral qualities were the same thing. It was possible to have the greatest personal immorality with the highest education. The highly educated recruit would not stay long in the Army, and if the soldier had the character some hon. Members wished him to have, they would find that he would not be possessed of better fighting qualities in consequence. [AN HON. MEMBER: Oh, yes.] If the hon. Member doubted him, let him ask, or rather consult, the Duke of Wellington. Personally he believed that the best Army this country ever sent out anywhere was the Army of the Peninsular, and of that Army its commander had a very poor opinion from the point of view of morals and character. He thought that hon. Members by insisting upon the production of a birth certificate and other conditions as to character, were asking too much from the Secretary of State for War. This Motion was based upon the assumption that there was an inexhaustible reservoir of men who, given better treatment and better pay, and having to give a better character, would readily join the Army. He believed that to be an utter mistake. This reservoir of unlimited men that had been assumed was more limited than hon. Members recognised. The men of good physique and character whom they wanted in the Army had not been attracted by the better pay and treatment which had been offered within the last four years. And why was this? Simply because they went elsewhere to seek the freedom the Army, as constituted, could not give.

There were some 52,000 of the best men in this country, with regard to physique, in the Metropolitan and local police force. Then they had got some 12,000 men in the Royal Irish Constabulary, and if he were a military man he would as soon command those men as any other body of men on earth. They had also got large numbers of men in municipal employment and employed as railway servants; and they had now 1,000,000 men, as compared with only about 150,000 at the time of the battle of Waterloo, who had to pass for the Navy, Army, the Militia, the Volunteers, and various Reserves a physical test that drew upon an enormous number of men; and this was a fact which they had not to consider during the Peninsular war and at the time of Waterloo. Wellington only had 26,000 troops of British birth to hold the fort of liberty, and when they contrasted the small number wanted at that time with the large number insisted upon now the surprise to him was not that they got the few they did—but the wonder was that they recruited the large number of men of good physique which they were now able to obtain. They would not induce those men who now joined the police force to go into the Army if they paid them the same rate as the police. This was because the Army did not give to the soldier and the non-commissioned officer those prospects of promotion which every policeman looked forward to, and which he invariably received. If they wanted to make the Army more popular and more attractive they would have to arrange for more promotions from the ranks.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! These are questions which do not arise upon this Motion which does not raise the question of promotion and the general attractiveness of the Army. It simply deals with the precautions to be taken to secure a higher standard of physique and character of recruits.

*MR. JOHN BURNS said it was difficult in discussing the question of character and birth certificates to get at why recruits had not joined and why the Army was unattractive. What hon. Members hoped to get by this Resolution could be got by giving greater freedom to the men, and that free flow of promotion which they got in other services. He came now to the question of securing a higher standard of physique for recruits. They could not get the class of recruits they wanted by adopting this Motion, for reasons that the Secretary of State for War could in no way be held responsible. The change in agriculture, the town drift, and the social and industrial conditions were such that they were attracting into other services the type of men who used to go into the Army in the old days; and instead of impeaching the War Office, as this Motion did, for not getting the proper standard of recruits, hon. Members who supported this Motion ought to have made their proposal wider, and they should have gone down to the bed-rock conditions that made the War Office have to accept the lower standard of physique which this Motion was directed to stop. This was really a wider question. The real difficulty was to be found in the paragraph of the Report of the Inspector-General of Recruiting, in which it was stated that the one subject which caused anxiety as to the future of recruiting was the gradual deterioration of the physique of the working, classes from whom the bulk of the recruits were drawn. So long as industrial conditions were what they were, so long would the physical, mental, and moral fibre of the working classes deteriorate. This Motion would not be a substitute for badly-cooked food, for tinned food, and adulterated food. It would be no substitute for the lack of milk and good bread for children when they were young, nor for their excessive labour during the period of growth. It would be no antidote to early marriages and intermittent employment, and other influences which produced the moral wrecks and physical wastrels who went to the recruiting sergeant.

Mr. John Burns.

The other day he was reading a wonderful book, written by four Edinburgh doctors, in which they stated that the food supply of the working classes compared unfavourably with the dietaries of workhouses, prisons, and lunatic asylums. So long as that condition of things was chronic, it was no use blaming the Secretary of State for War. This was a social, national, and Imperial question, and if they would remove the condition of things which produced the low standard of comfort alluded to by those Edinburgh doctors, he was sure they would go a long way to remove the evils that this Motion hoped to remedy. The sad thing about many of these recruits was, that although the patriotic spirit was strong within them, their bodily strength was weak. But they should not blame the men or the War Office for this state of things, but they should try and remove the causes that prevented men's bodies being equal to their spirit, and the patriotic principles which inspired those weak bodies to enlist. If a country yielded to its people a sufficiency of food and stamina, that country would never lack vigorous defenders. Good though physical education, character, and birth certificates might be, this was only touching the fringe of the whole subject, and all those questions were subordinate to better homes, stronger physique, and better constitutions. That would have to be made and developed long before the Army age of recruiting was reached. Why did they not tackle this subject in a better way? Why did they not remove the causes which drove men of good physique out of the Army? Out of 2,887 desertions from the Army of recruits, 1,302, or 70 per cent., were men who had done under three months service. These men were of good physique, and wanted to be in the Army, and why did they leave within three months? Because even with men of good physique the system of drill was too violent, and the change from civil life to rapidly enforced discipline made them leave the Army, and this made the Service unpopular.

Look at the way the poor fellows were punished for the most trivial thing. Among the civilian population the number of punishments was fifty-six per 100,000, but in the Army it amounted to 600 per 100,000. In other words, the punishments in the Army were eleven times worse than for offences of a worse type amongst persons outside the Army. If they would treat the soldier less like a child, and give him more freedom, and allow him more time out of barracks, and treat him as the American people treated their soldiers, they would not want motions of this description. He believed that this was the wrong way to do the right thing. He wished some hon. Member would put down a Motion to draw attention to the rapid deterioration of the physique of their industrial classes. When they were able with greater latitude to discuss the whole of this question, and when they could go back to the root causes as to why weak recruits were produced and why medical officers were compelled, under a national emergency, to pass this type of recruit, then they would get at the real reason why the standard in the Army had got to be reduced. Until then they would be obliged to support this Motion in one part and condemn it in the other, because it only dealt with the fringe of the question.

If they wanted men of strong physique and good character, the time for developing those qualities was when they were between ten and thirteen years of age. He asked hon. Members not to "chevvy" the Secretary of State for War too much on matters like this. There were some lads in the Army who were better men at sixteen or seventeen years of age than some town lads were at twenty or twenty-one, and it would be preposterous to compel the right hon. Gentleman to discharge such men because the rigid rule had to be adhered to. There must be a certain latitude and discretion, and if they tied the Secretary of State's hands in this way it would do more harm than good. If they wanted to make the Army popular they must do it in other ways. Until this country realised the evils of sweating, of slum dwellings, of bad housing of the poor, of excess of drinking, the prevalence of vice and gambling, and other things—until these matters were recognised as worthy of national consideration and prompt and earnest attention, they would never solve this problem. It was because he believed that the Army could be made ten times more attractive in other ways that he had spoken in this way. He regretted that they had been circumscribed in the debate by the ruling of the Chair. After the experience of the Duke of Wellington and our own experience in the South African War, he thought they would agree with him that birth certificates and character would not enable men to get their officers out of very tight places. Roughness of character was not incompatible with the highest qualities of the fighting soldier. He hoped hon. Members would not ask for a Sunday-school gilt-edged certificate as to the number of times a person went to church when they were taking recruits for the Army. If he were a general in a tight corner he would rather have with him, in order to get out of it, fifty corner-boys than one hundred curates.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs) said he could not agree with the Financial Secretary to the War Office when he said that this had been a barren debate. On the contrary, he thought it had been a most useful debate. If he were to select any particular part as being more to the point than another it would be the speech of his hon. friend the Member for Battersea, who was, with regard to some of his remarks, promptly and necessarily ruled out of order. As my hon. friend has elaborately shown to the House, the real avenue for good recruits is to get a good, well-nourished, and well-developed population from which to draw the recruits. If you are going to choose a commodity from a certain source, you cannot have the commodity better than the source from which you choose it. His hon. friend the Member for Battersea had set the example of quoting French; and now that Latin appeared to be altogether out of favour, perhaps the House would allow him to quote a French epigram which was very much to the point:—"Pourquoi nos généraux sont ils si bêtes? Parcequ'on les choisit parmi les colonels." You cannot have better recruits than your population can give you, and when you complain of the low standard and the defective physique of the young men in the Army, in order to cure that you must deal with the housing and the surroundings of the population from whence they come. His hon. friend who had just sat down said that moral character was not necessary for the good soldier, and that was no doubt perfectly true. They had to consider the effect of having bad characters in the Army. They might fight very well and might be very good soldiers, but those who were engaged in the work of making the Army as popular as they could, had in the first place to make parents believe that their sons would not be injured by going into the Army. He would advise his hon. friend to leave out of his Motion the words "or retained." Some of the youths enlisted under eighteen might develop into muscular and intelligent men. If they agreed to that, and if, instead of binding the Secretary of State to insist upon a certificate of age, they provided that no man should be accepted who there was reason to believe was under eighteen years of age, he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would accept the resolution so modified, and would save them the trouble of a division, which would misrepresent the general feeling of the House.

Mr. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford) said he thought the right hon. Gentleman had fairly interpreted the opinion of the House on this subject. They desired to obtain the best they could for their money, but they must be careful not to go too far. The age of eighteen was adopted, not because it was the minimum age at which men were fitted for the service but because it was the average age below which they did not wish to take them.

He thought it would be a fair compromise if they adopted the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman. He did not think they ought to be bound closely to the age of eighteen, nor ought they to put obstacles in the way of recruits enlisting. He was not inclined to accept the words "higher standard of physique." That would be understood to mean that the present standard was not sufficient. He would accept the words "adequate standard of physique," which would be an expression of opinion, but did not oblige them to adopt a higher standard than that which was now taken. He would accept the right hon. Gentleman's suggestion that the latter part of the Resolution should read "and that as regards age no man should be accepted who is known or believed to be under the age of eighteen years."

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'secure,' to the end of the Question, and add the words 'an adequate standard of physique of recruits accepted; and that as regards age no man should be accepted who is known or believed to be under the age of eighteen years.'"—(*Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) criticised the wording of the Resolution as proposed to be amended, and said the whole Resolution as amended would be extraordinarily vague. He trusted the House would not, for the first time, accept eighteen as a "good average age."

Colonel KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport) said the hon. Member for Battersea had begged the House, or rather he had begged what he called "hon. and gallant Members," not to "chevvy" the Secretary of State for War. Well, chevvying the Secretary of State for War was not the part taken by those Members of the House who knew most of the Army. The chevvying of the Secretary of State for War came from irresponsible enthusiasts. Those Members who were entitled to attach hon. and gallant to their names would not chevvy the right hon. Gentleman, but would leave that singularly ignoble pursuit to those who spoke not altogether in the interest of the readministration of the Army, but for purposes closely connected with self-advertisement. He took it that outside these walls and in military circles the gentlemen who assumed that attitude would be well understood, and the motives of those Members would be pretty accurately diagnosed. He personally did not attach very much military importance to the hon. Members to whom he referred. An appeal had been made by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition to accept the attitude which the Secretary of State for War had taken up in this matter. Of course it was impossible to satisfy those who wished to secure a little petty score off the right hon. Gentleman. He put them on one side. They were, he thought, not of very much importance either here or elsewhere. There would be a general consensus of opinion that the right hon. Gentleman in his first speech, when he introduced the scheme, and in all the replies he had made to the various mosquitoes that had buzzed about him, had shown his sympathy with everything that could possibly be done to improve the status of recruiting, to improve the qualification of recruits coming forward for the Army.

He thought it would be acknowledged that the right hon. Gentleman could hardly go further than he had gone. Soldiers inside and outside of this House would infinitely prefer to have the Army recruited from the highest and best classes of agricultural labourers and artisans. They would prefer to have the Army recruited from classes which could furnish them with the most orthodox birth certificate and with the highest possible character. But the objection to that was that they could not get them, and if they could get them it would mean that a certain number of men joining the Army would be withdrawn from the first-class of the working population, whether agricultural or artisan; but it should be remembered that beneath the highest and above the lowest class of men there was a large number of excellent men whose characters, perhaps, were not absolutely as high as would satisfy the requirements some of these purists would demand, but who were first-class fighting stuff. They were men who, for reasons personal to themselves, or out of a spirit of adventure, preferred to spend a few years in the Army before returning and settling down in life. Look what would be the result with respect to that class of recruits if the Motion were adopted? They would possibly have to refuse them, because they did not come up to some imaginary standard of purity, and the only effect would be that they would not obtain a class of men who were quite suited for the service. There was one matter in connection with the subject of recruiting to which he desired to call attention. He suggested that there should be throughout the country local bureaux, at the head of which there should be the Lord-Lieutenant of each county, where the names of recruits could be registered, and where they would have a right to apply for employment after they had returned from service with the Colours. It would be better to do that than to set up an artificial standard for character. He did say in this House, and to the larger audience outside, that the attitude of the Secretary of State for War on this question had been all that any responsible statesman could be expected to take up, and that he was dealing with this in a manner which was absolutely the best in the opinion of the heads of the Army. Those who found fault with the right hon. Gentleman were inspired only by the unworthy motives of those who pretended to have the interests of the Army at heart, but who were only acting in the interest of a political cabal.

Question put, and negatived.

Words added.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Resolved, "That this House, while welcoming the recent War Office Memorandum regarding the character of recruits, is of opinion that, in order to adequately fit the British soldier for his duties at home and abroad, greater efforts should be made and precautions taken to secure an adequate standard of physique of recruits accepted; and that as regards age no man should be accepted who is known or believed to be under the age of eighteen years.'

Adjourned at seven minutes after
Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 26th March, 1903.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Bangor Corporation Bill [H.L.]. Report from His Majesty's Attorney-General received, and ordered to lie on the Table.

Birmingham District Tramways Bill [H.L.]. The meeting of the Standing Orders Committee (which stands appointed for this day) put off to Monday next.

Standing Orders Committee—Report from, That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Thames River Steamboat Service Bill ought to be dispensed with, provided that Clause 27 be struck out of the Bill.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the petition for a Bill by the Jewish Colonisation Association ought to be dispensed with, and leave given to introduce the Bill.

Read and agreed to.

Hexham Gas Bill [H.L.]. Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Lima Railways Bill [H.L.]; Indiarubber, Guttapercha, and Telegraph Works Company Bill [H.L.]. Reported, with Amendments.

North's Navigation Collieries Bill [H.L.]; Faversham Gas Bill [H.L.]; Exeter Railway Bill [H.L.]. Reported, with Amendments.

West Bromwich Corporation Bill [H.L.]. The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the opposition to the Bill was withdrawn: Bill committed.

St. Philip's Chapel (Regent Street) Bill [H.L.]; All Saints, Poplar (Rate Abolition) Bill [H.L.]. Committed.

Bangor Corporation Bill [H.L.]. Read 2ª [according to order].

Electric Lighting (London) Bill [H.L.]. Committed: The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Light Locomotives (Ireland) Bill. Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to.

Frinton-on-Sea Sea Defences Bill [H.L.]; Rickmansworth Gas Bill [H.L.]; Pelican and British Empire Life Office Bill [H.L.]; Wellington (Salop) Gas Bill [H.L.]; Southampton Harbour Bill [H.L.]; Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation Bill [H.L.]; Harrow and Stanmore Gas Bill [H.L.]; Bournemouth Corporation Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Poole and District Electric Traction Bill [H.L.]; Birmingham Corporation Bill [H.L.]. Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; viz.:

E. Romney.
L. Sandhurst.
L. Shute (*V. Barrington.*)
L. Newton (Chairman).
L. Wandsworth.

Agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly. The Committee to meet on Thursday the 30th of April next at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills.

South-Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway Bill [H.L.]; South-Eastern and London, Chatham, and Dover Railways Bill [H.L.]; Sutton Coldfield Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Cardiff Railway Bill [H.L.]; Manchester Southern Tramways (Lancashire) Bill [H.L.]; Manchester Southern Tramways (Cheshire) Bill [H.L.]; South Lancashire Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Bill [H.L.]; North Cheshire Tramways Bill [H.L.]. Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; viz.:

E. Camperdown (Chairman)
E. Lytton.
L. Ellenborough.
L. Hylton.
L. Rosmead.

Agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly. The Committee to meet

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

on Thursday the 30th of April next at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired as also counsel for the Bills.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

No. 2944. United States (Consular District of Baltimore).

No. 2945. Germany (Estimates of German Empire).

No. 2946. Chile (Coquimbo).

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Report and Papers relating to the training of teachers for the year 1901–1902.

INDIA (ENTERTAINMENT OF INDIAN AND COLONIAL GUESTS).

Correspondence relating to the entertainment of Indian and Colonial guests visiting this country by invitation of His Majesty's Government.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION (PROCEEDINGS).

Return for the month of January, 1903.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Tables showing the populations of counties, districts, and boroughs in Scotland with reference to the proposals of the Bill.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, AND DEATHS, AND VACCINATION.

Forty-eighth Annual Report of the Registrar-General in Scotland for the year 1902, and Thirty-eighth Annual Report on Vaccination.

Presented [by Command], and ordered to lie on the Table

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT 1889.

University Court Ordinance No. VII. (Aberdeen, No. 1.) Foundation of the Burnett-Fletcher Chair of History and Archæology in the University of Aberdeen; laid before the House [pursuant to Act], and to be printed. (No. 24.)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Standing Order No. XXXIX. considered [according to order], and suspended for this day's sitting.

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION BILL [H.L.]

Amendments reported [according to order], and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow.

MARINE INSURANCE BILL [H.L.].

Bill read 3ª [according to order.]

Earl RUSSELL moved to amend Section (1) of Clause 16—which provides that "the insurable value, in the case of a steamship, includes also the machinery, boilers," etc. — by the insertion, after "steamship," of the words "or every vessel propelled by mechanical power." He hoped the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack would agree that in a Bill which was intended to codify the law with regard to marine insurance, every case should be provided for. Electric launches and launches driven by petrol were becoming more greatly used every day. There was, for instance, to be a race between petrol launches at Cork on the occasion of the Gordon-Bennett race, and, of course, these would be valuable boats with exceedingly valuable machinery which could properly form the subject of marine insurance. He hoped the noble and learned Lord, with a view to completeness, would accept the words he had moved.

Amendment moved—

> "In Clause 16, line 28, after 'steamship' to insert 'or other vessel propelled by mechanical power.'"—(*Earl Russell.*)

The LORD CHANCELLOR (The Earl of Halsbury): I am afraid I cannot accept the noble Earl's Amendment. This Bill has been drafted by people who know thoroughly well what they are dealing with. I should despair of attempting to form any complete description of what should be the policy of marine insurance in respect of this particular mode of risk. I can assure the noble Earl that those who take a deep interest in this Bill would be very reluctant indeed to accept this Amendment. I do not know what the future may bring forth with respect to such matters, but, at all events, if there is a development of new motive power, and the risks can be properly calculated by those who effect marine insurance, it must be done by persons who have contemplated all the risks that may arise. I am not disposed to put into a Bill that has been before the trade for five years an experimental clause, and one which might cause considerable embarrassment.

On Question, Amendment negatived.

Bill read 3^a, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

STANDARD FOR RECRUITS.

LORD DENMAN: My Lords, I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for War what is the present standard as regards height and chest measurement for recruits for infantry of the line; what was the standard in January 1899; whether the Under Secretary can give further information regarding the new system of chest measurement mentioned in paragraph 35, page 8, of the Report of the Inspector-General of Recruiting; and whether he can give the average height and chest measurement of recruits for infantry of the line during the past year, also for the year 1898–99. I do not think the first two questions require any further comment from me. The only one which may, perhaps, require a little explanation is that which alludes to the Report of the Inspector-General of Recruiting. In the paragraph I have quoted, the Inspector-General states that an absolute minimum was laid down as regards chest measurement below which it was considered unsafe to enlist recruits. I should like to ask the noble Earl if he can tell me exactly what that minimum was. There is another statement in the Report to the effect that the system of chest measurement was based entirely on range of expansion. I would again ask the noble Earl to explain a little more in detail the system alluded to. Before the South African War the system of chest measurement, I think, was this—two measurements, the minimum and the maximum, were put down on the attestation paper of every recruit. I believe that system has now been altered. I do not know whether only one measurement is now put down, but, at any rate, there are rumours that rather an elastic scheme has been allowed to creep into the present system. The question of chest measurement is, in my opinion, one of considerable importance and not unworthy of the attention of your Lordships, because it is chest measurement, as all medical men will agree, which gives a soldier the requisite power to endure the strain of modern warfare, which is as great if not greater than in former times. I think it would allay considerable uneasiness in those circles where a keen interest is taken in military affairs if the noble Earl could give a satisfactory answer to the questions I have ventured to ask.

*THE UNDER SECRETARY of STATE FOR WAR (The Earl of HARDWICKE): I will endeavour to give the information which the noble Lord desires. He asks, in the first place, what is the present standard as regards height and chest measurement for recruits for infantry of the line. The present standard of height is 5 feet 3 inches. It was the same in January, 1899. The noble Lord next inquires whether I can give him further information regarding the new system of chest measurement. I will pass over that question for a moment and come to the last one, namely, whether I can give the average height and chest measurement of recruits for infantry of the line during the past year and also for the year 1898–99. I would refer the noble Lord to the Annual Report of the British Army for the latter year, which will give him part of the information he desires. I cannot give him the figures for the past year, for the reason that, as he himself has pointed out, a new system of chest measurement has been introduced. Under the old system no recruit was accepted, except as a "special," whose minimum chest measurement was less than 33 inches. But on 1st April last a new system was introduced, and this system was introduced in accordance with the Report of a Committee of experts, comprising military medical officers and civilian doctors. They examined the question very carefully, and, since April last, instead of taking the chest measurement—the girth of the chest when fully expanded is taken, and then, when the recruit has ceased to "blow himself out"—I cannot for the moment think of a better term to express my meaning—the measurement is again taken, and if there is a difference of not less than 2 in. between the two measurements then the recruit is accepted, whereas if the difference is less than 2 in. he is not accepted. Since the introduction of the new system no man has been accepted for the Army who did not comply with those conditions. In future it is intended to issue a Return showing the average height, chest measurement, and weight of every recruit on enlistment. Then after he has completed six months service, and gone through gymnastic training, he will again be measured, and if he has not, according to the requirements laid down by the Committee to which I have referred, increased his physical development to the extent considered necessary, he will not be allowed to remain in the Army. When this Return is published, the noble Lord will see the exact extent to which every recruit developed after six months training in the service. I think I have given the noble Lord the information for which he has asked.

LORD DENMAN: I am much obliged to the noble Earl for the statement he has just made, but I should like to know what the absolute minimum chest measurement laid down was.

*THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: There is no minimum which can be said to apply to every recruit. It all depends upon his height and general physique. But I would refer the noble Lord to the Recruiting Regulations for 1902. If he will look on page 5, under "Test A," he will get the information he requires.

LORD RIBBLESDALE: As I understand the noble Earl refers to a Return for the year 1898–99, which gives the average height and chest measurement of recruits for that period, I would suggest that, as he has the Blue-book in his hand, he should tell us what the average height and chest measurement was in that year, so that we can know whether the new measurement is to be greater or less than before.

*THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: The book consists of about 140 pages, and various statistics bearing on the subject are given. It would be very difficult for me to pick out the figures at this moment and give the noble Lord a definite answer to the Question he puts. He is quite welcome to the Book and can look for himself.

LORD RIBBLESDALE: Do I understand that the War Office have not boiled down these 140 pages of statistics sufficiently to enable them to arrive at the average height and chest measurement? I suppose the Question has been on the Paper for some time.

*THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: If I had known that the noble Lord wanted this worked out I would have taken the pains necessary to have had it done, but I think the House will perfectly understand that it is a matter of very small importance what the height or chest measurement of a man is after he has been in the service a certain number of years. What you want to know is what is the development of soldiers in the first six months of training, and that is what the War Office in the future are going to give very fully.

LORD DENMAN: Do I understand that the only test as regards chest measurement is whether or not the recruit can expand or contract his chest two inches? Is there no definite limit?

*THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: No. The minimum, as I have explained, is laid down according to the height and physical development of each man. You cannot lay down one minimum for all recruits. The test is whether a recruit can contract two inches after inflation. That is the principal test, and it is considered by the highest authorities whom we have been able to consult on the matter as absolutely necessary for the well being and the physical development of our Army.

LORD RIBBLESDALE: What is the irreducible minimum? Is the irreducible minimum the "blown out" recruit or the "unblown out" recruit? Surely the chest measurement of a man is not taken when he is "blown out" but when he is in his normal condition.

*THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: The irreducible minimum is the "blown out" recruit.

LORD RIBBLESDALE: I think it will have to be stated in an algebraic equation.

QUEENSLAND AND THE REPATRIATION OF KANAKAS.

*LORD LAMINGTON: My Lords, I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to a cablegram which appeared in the issue of the *Daily Mail* of the 21st instant, having reference to the deportation of Kanakas from Queensland; whether any communication as alleged has been received from Captain Rason, R.N., the British resident in the New Hebrides. I do not myself understand how the situation described by Captain Rason can have yet arisen, but perhaps it is a forecast of what may occur in 1906. I would also ask what protective measures in the interest of returned Pacific Islanders have been adopted by the Commonwealth Government in accordance with the statement made by the noble Earl in this House, and whether these are framed on the previous regulations of the Queensland Government, or whether fresh ones have been substituted. In reply to a Question put on my behalf last December by my noble friend Lord Stanmore, the Under Secretary stated that the South Sea Islanders were not British subjects.† I venture to think that that was hardly correct, because they are largely recruited from islands which are for the most part under British jurisdiction. I should have thought, therefore, that they were entitled to be treated as British subjects.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (the Earl of ONSLOW): My Lords, I am a subscriber to the *Daily Mail*, but I do not know that I read it with very great care every day. As soon as the noble Lord's Question appeared on the Paper, however, I made it my business to read the cablegram to which he has referred, and I venture to think that it partakes of a somewhat sensational character. I gather from the terms of the cablegram that any unfortunate Kanaka who returned to his country would immediately be killed, cooked, and eaten, on the most approved principles. I really think that that is a very great exaggeration; and even if it were true that there is a prospect of these persons being killed, every precaution will be taken to see that they do not go back to the place where any such fate might await them. Captain Rason is at this moment in Queensland, and his special business is to go among the Kanakas, who, under the Act, will shortly be repatriated to their own country, and to inform them of what opportunities are available for them. If there is the slightest danger, or even if they fear there is the slightest danger, in their own part of the world, there are many places open to them in the New Hebrides and Solomon Islands, and elsewhere, where the planters will be only too glad to avail themselves of their services. I cannot help thinking that when we get Captain Rason's report we shall find that he has been able to give them assurances and to make provision for their being taken to some part of the British possessions, or to islands under the British protectorate, where they will be sure of good and safe treatment. The noble Lord found some fault with a remark I made when my noble friend Lord Stanmore put a Question to me at the end of last session, to the effect that these Kanakas were not British subjects. Many of them come from islands that are certainly not part of the British possessions, some of them are not even within the sphere of influence of Great Britain, and residence in Queensland does not make them British subjects. But none the less His Majesty's Government and the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia recognise that it is their duty to give every facility for the protection of these men, just the same as if they were subjects of His Majesty.

*LORD LAMINGTON: I am much obliged to the noble Earl for his satisfactory answer. I have got what I was anxious to obtain, namely, the appointment of an official to safeguard the interest of these Kanakas. But I should like to ask the noble Lord whether he will undertake that this Report, when it is received from Captain Rason, will be laid on the Table; whether the Federal Government have drawn up a series of regulations which can also be printed and laid on the Table of the House, or whether they are acting simply on the regulations which the Queensland Government have been acting upon hitherto. In any case I think the regulations should be made public.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxvi., 1459.

THE EARL OF ONSLOW: I think I can meet the wishes of the noble Lord best by laying on the Table of the House the communication we have received from the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia enclosing a memorandum from the Ministers in response to a request from His Majesty's Government that they would take every precaution to see that these men were properly treated. I do not know whether they are being returned to their islands under the Queensland regulations, or under a fresh set of regulations, but I will inquire, and if I find that the regulations can be laid on the Table I will certainly adopt that course.

House adjourned during pleasure.

House resumed.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Brought from the Commons, and read 1ª: Then (Standing Order No. XXXIX. having been suspended) Bill read 2ª (The Earl Waldegrave). Committee negatived. Bill read 3ª, and passed.

House adjourned at ten minutes past Twelve o'clock a.m., till Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 26th March, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS.

The Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of Ways and Means.

NEW WRIT.

New Writ for the County of Cornwall (North-Western, or Camborne, Division), in the room of William Sproston Caine, esquire, deceased.—(*Mr. Herbert Gladstone.*)

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 63 COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order No. 63 has been complied with, viz.:—

Thames Steamboat Trust Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

DUBLIN IMPROVEMENT (BULL ALLEY AREA) BILL.

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY (PENSION FUND) BILL.

Read the third time, and passed.

GREAT EASTERN RAILWAY (No. 1) BILL.

Reported with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP No. 1).

Mr. KIMBER reported from the Committee on Group No. 1 of Railway Bills, That, there being no business ready for the consideration of the Committee, they had adjourned until Tuesday next, at half-past Eleven of the Clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP NO. 2)

Captain BOWLES reported from the Committee on Group No. 2 of Railway Bills, That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned until Monday next, at Eleven of the Clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

PETITIONS.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Berks; Derby; Shropshire; and, Lancaster; to lie upon the Table.

EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Birmingham, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LAND VALUES ASSESSMENT AND RATING BILL.

Petition from Greenock, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

Petitions against: from Leighton Buzzard; Newtown and Llanidloes; Maryport; and, Hastings; to lie upon the Table.

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.

Petitions against establishment: from Grantown; and, Dingwall; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petition from Soham, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

SITE VALUES OF INSANITARY AREAS.

Petition from Battersea, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

VAGRANTS (COMPULSORY VACCINATION AND RE-VACCINATION.)

Petition from Wirral, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EAST INDIA (ENTERTAINMENT OF INDIAN AND COLONIAL GUESTS).

Copy presented, of correspondence relating to the entertainment of Indian and Colonial guests visiting this country by invitation of His Majesty's Government [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIA (INCOME AND EXPENDITURE).

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 4th March; *Sir Henry Fowler.*] to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 95.]

NAVY ESTIMATES 1902–1903 (STATEMENT ON PROGRAMME OF SHIPBUILDING, ETC.).

Copy presented, of statement showing probable effect on the programme of shipbuilding, reconstruction, repairs, maintenance, etc., due to the re-appropriation of cash provision, etc. [by Command]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 96.]

IRISH LAND COMMISSION (PROCEEDINGS).

Copy presented, of Return of Proceedings during the month of January, 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

BIRTHS, DEATHS, MARRIAGES, AND VACCINATION (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of the Forty-eighth Annual Report on the Births, Deaths, and Marriages in Scotland for 1902, and Thirty-Eighth Annual Report on Vaccination [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Copy presented, of Tables showing the populations of counties, districts, and Burghs in Scotland, with reference to the proposals of the Bill [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 2944 to 2946 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LUNATIC ASYLUMS (IRELAND).

Return ordered, "showing in respect of each asylum district in Ireland for each of the last twenty-one years 1882 to 1902, inclusive, the contributions towards the provision of district asylums and the maintenance of lunatics in asylums in the following form:—(1) Year; (2) Charges for maintenance — (*a*) fuel, water, and light; (*b*) salaries and superannuations; (*c*) clothing; and (*d*) other expenses, including minor repairs and upkeep; (3) Repayments, including principal and interest to Commissioners of Public Works, of loans advanced in respect of expenditure on new works, additions and alterations, purchase of additional land, etc. (exclusive of minor repairs and alterations); (4) Total of expenditure in preceding columns; (5) Receipts from—(*e*) Parliamentary grant; (*f*) paying patients and other sources except (*e*) and (*g*); and (*g*) rates."—(*Mr. Clancy.*)

FLEETS (GREAT BRITAIN AND FOREIGN COUNTRIES).

Return ordered, "showing the Fleets of Great Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Italy, United States of America, and Japan, distinguishing: battleships, built and building; cruisers, built and building; coast defence vessels, built and building; torpedo vessels, torpedo boat destroyers, and torpedo boats, built and building."

"Return to show date of launch, displacement, and armaments, reduced to one common scale (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 322, of Session 1902)."—(*Sir Charles Dilke.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Ireland—School at Silvermines—Delay in Erection.

MR. P. J. O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that in October, 1902, the Board of Education made a grant for the building of parochial school houses at Silvermines, County Tipperary, and that the manager was informed that new plans would be prepared and would be ready in a short time; and whether he can say when the plans will be sent on.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) A grant was sanctioned as stated. The issue of the plans was postponed pending the consideration of the Report of the Committee appointed to investigate the general question of grants for school houses. A decision will shortly be arrived at in the matter.

South Africa—Mining Claims Lottery.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can state whether the Claims Lottery advertised in the *Pretoria Gazette* of 5th April, 1899, by virtue of Article 35 of the Gold Law (Law 15, 1898), and for which some 30,000 applications were made by persons to whom certificates were issued, is to be carried out.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain.*) The *Transvaal Government Gazette* of the 6th February last published a notification that this lottery will not be carried out.

H.M.S. "Highflyer"—Working of Boilers.

MR. HARMSWORTH (Caithness-shire): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he can state whether any trouble has been experienced in the working of the boilers of the "Highflyer."

(*Answered by Mr. Arnold-Forster.*) I am informed that the only trouble experienced in the working of the boilers of the "Highflyer" has been a leakage at the nipple joints on the feed collectors, due to the worn state of the nickel rings from fair wear and tear. These rings have been renewed as opportunities offered, and the latest report from the ship states that the boilers are in an efficient condition.

Improved Shooting in the Navy.

MR. HARMSWORTH: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he can state what steps the Admiralty propose to take to improve the shooting in the following ships, the "Speedy," "Hannibal," "Vengeance," "Aboukir" "Cressy," "Bulwark,"and "Canopus," in view of the results obtained by these ships in recent firings.

(*Answered by Mr. Arnold-Forster.*) The Admiralty are fully alive to the importance of good shooting in the Navy, and take all the steps which they consider necessary to improve it. It is the practice of the Admiralty, as well as of the Commanders-in-Chief on the several stations, to correct and call attention to any cases of indifferent shooting, and to commend ships in which the practice is specially good. I wish to add that the conclusions drawn from the mere record of prize firing are likely to be misleading unless the circumstances under which the firing is carried out in each case are taken into account. Thus, in reference to the "Speedy" mentioned in the hon. Member's Question, while there were no actual hits on the target the Captain reports:—"Though the target was not actually struck, I consider the shooting was very good, as the men were severely handicapped by the motion of the ship and the strong wind blowing across the range."

Kingwilliamstown, Cork, Postmaster—Superannuation Allowance.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been called to the official correspondence in respect to the application of Cornelius Sullivan, postmaster, Kingwilliamstown, County Cork, for a retiring allowance; and whether, in view of the fact that this man gave a continuous service of nearly forty-seven years, the postal authorities will give favourable considerations to his case.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) The conditions of Mr. Sullivan's employment were not such as to render him eligible for any award under the Superannuation Acts, and I regret that I am unable, therefore, to obtain any pension or gratuity for him on retirement. The appointment of sub-postmaster which Mr. Sullivan held was, at his own request, transferred to his son.

Eastbourne Sub-Post Offices.

MR. FREEMAN THOMAS (Hastings): To ask the Postmaster-General if he is aware that certain sub-post offices in Eastbourne are situated in premises used as wine and spirit stores; and if he can have these offices removed to other premises.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) If the hon. Member will give me the addresses of the offices to which he refers I will make inquiry.

Uganda Railway (Materials) Return.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): To ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether he will grant the Return, standing on to-day's Notice Paper, with reference to the Uganda Railway.†

(*Answered by Lord Cranborne.*) I should be ready to give a Return showing briefly the prices paid for rails, sleepers, girders, locomotives, carriages and bridgework. As, however, the total number of requisitions which have been executed during the past seven years for supplying the Uganda Railway with the various permanent way materials, etc., mentioned by the hon. Member amounts to no less than 1,082, and as each of these again contains a large number of items, I should hardly feel justified in incurring the expense involved in supplying the elaborate particulars for which the hon. Member has asked.

Export of Offals

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY (Somersetshire, S.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will state what has been the amount of the export of offals in the past ten months compared with the corresponding period in previous years; to what countries are the exported offals sent; and whether any of these countries compete with the farmers of the United Kingdom in the production of meat or of dairy produce.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) The information as far as possible is being compiled, and the particulars shall be supplied to the hon. Member as soon as they are ready.

"Labour Gazette" Return of Non-Fatal Industrial Accidents.

MR. BELL (Derby): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will explain why the Return of Non-fatal Industrial Accidents in the *Labour Gazette* has been discontinued; and will he take steps to have the Return of such accidents published again as hitherto.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) The publication of monthly statistics of non-fatal accidents has been discontinued, because it is considered that the figures are misleading, in view of the great variations in the standard of reportable accidents in different classes of industries, to which attention has been called by the Report of the Departmental Committee on the Notification of Industrial Accidents presented to Parliament last year. The annual totals will be published as heretofore in the Abstract of Labour Statistics and the *Labour Gazette*. If effect is given to the recommendations of the Committee, it may be possible to renew the monthly publications.

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† The Return was as follows: Uganda Railway (Materials),—Address for Return giving particulars and dates upon which the permanent way materials, rails, sleepers, rolling stock, and iron bridge work used in the construction of the Uganda Railway were purchased, the firm from whom they were obtained, and the prices paid therefor.

British Capital in Foreign and Colonial Undertakings.

MR. MITCHELL (Lancashire, Burnley): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he can state the aggregate amount of British capital invested in countries outside the United Kingdom, and the annual amount of income tax derived from such investments.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) I am unable to say what is the amount of British capital invested outside the United Kingdom. The profits from such investments, on which income tax is received, amount, so far as they can be identified, to rather more than £60,000,000 per annum.

Duty Paid under Sugar and Corn Taxes.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, before the introduction of the Budget, he will place at the disposal of Members a list of the various commodities upon which duty has been paid under the sugar and corn taxes, and showing what has been the amount of duty paid in each case during the present financial year.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) I cannot undertake to give such a Return, which would necessarily be a long and difficult one to prepare.

Marriage of Postal Servants—Income Tax on Joint Incomes.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether in the event of women in receipt of pensions due for previous service in the post office marrying a clerk still in postal employment their joint incomes are liable for income tax; whether his attention has been directed to cases in which the joint incomes of the two persons, being less than £200 per annum, have been treated as the salary of the husband for income tax purposes; and whether he can state the reasons for this action.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) In such cases as these to which the hon. Member refers, the incomes of husband and wife are aggregated for income tax purposes. Of course, if the aggregate income is less than £400, it is taxed only on the excess over £160. A pension received by a married woman living with her husband is not a profit "from any business carried on or exercised by means of her own personal labour," so as to entitle the husband to make a separate claim for exemption or abatement in respect of it under Section 5 (1) of The Finance Act, 1897

Labourers' Cottages in Ireland—Unexpended Balance.

MR. FFRENCH (Wexford, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, seeing that there are still agricultural labourers in Ireland in need of cottages and plots of land, and that the unexpended balance arising out of the grant of 1891 amounts to £58,942 and cannot be used for labourers' cottages, he will consider the advisability of amending the law so as to make this sum of money available for the purpose intended by Parliament.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The question of the utilisation of this money, or a portion of it, is at present engaging attention.

Army—Home Stations outside the United Kingdom.

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): To ask the Secretary of State for War what military stations abroad are now reckoned as Home stations, and how many infantry battalions at present serving out of the United Kingdom are reckoned as Home battalions for purposes of the linked-battalion system.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) No stations abroad are reckoned as Home stations, but fifteen of the battalions temporarily detained in South Africa have been estimated for at the numbers on the Home establishment, but are being temporarily kept up to Foreign establishment by drafts.

Army—Chaplains for Troops in Scotland.

COLONEL DENNY (Kilmarnock, Burghs): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will explain why there is no commissioned chaplain with the troops in Scotland; and why appointments as acting chaplains are made after consulting only the Established Church of Scotland and not the United Free Church.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) Owing to the absence in South Africa of several commissioned Presbyterian chaplains none are available for duty in Scotland. I am informed that the present system, under which excellent acting chaplains have been selected both from the Established Church and the United Free Church, has been found to work well.

Royal Engineers—Compulsory Vaccination of the Civil Staff.

MR. CORRIE GRANT (Warwickshire, Rugby): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that clerks of works on the Royal Engineer civil staff have been ordered to be vaccinated on penalty of dismissal; and, if so, will he state whether this order has been issued with his sanction.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) Nothing is known of any such specific cases. The General Officer Commanding Home District, issued orders about a year ago during the smallpox epidemic that such clerks were not to be taken on if they refused vaccination.

Birching of Youthful Offenders.

MR. KEIR HARDIE: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to cases in which sentences of birching have been passed by magistrates on youthful offenders at Durham on 5th December, 1902, at Slough on 1st January, 1903, at Worcester on 20th February, 1903, and at West Ham on 21st February, 1903; and to the fact that in cases where a sentence of birching would have been illegal, magistrates have induced the parents of boys to consent to the infliction of private chastisement at the hands of a police officer, and within the precincts of the court; and, if so, will he say whether the use of the officers and precincts of the court for this purpose has received his sanction.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas.*) My attention having been drawn to the four cases of birching mentioned by the hon. Member, I made inquiry into the circumstances, but found no ground for action on my part, though in two of them I addressed a communication to the magistrates. I may add that in all four cases the newspaper reports, in consequence of which representations had been made to me, were inaccurate in material points. As regards the last part of the Question it is most desirable to avoid by all legitimate means the sending of youthful offenders to prison; and, in order to do so, magistrates sometimes discharge a boy on condition that the parents undertake that some personal correction shall be administered. In such a case the Secretary of State cannot interfere, nor is his sanction necessary to allow of the correction being administered by a police officer or in the precincts of the court.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Undesirable Soldiers.

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, whether he will arrange that commanding officers of regiments, battalions, and batteries shall be granted the power to discharge, without reference to the War Office, any private soldier in their command whom they may certify in writing to be an undesirable character, whose retention would be injurious to the interests of the service.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): No reference to the War Office is necessary in such cases. The General Officer Commanding has power to authorise the discharge of any man for "misconduct" or "on account of his services being no longer required" on the application of the commanding officer. It is not considered advisable to delegate this authority to the commanding officer alone, as uniformity of practice is desirable.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: May I ask whether, in view of the right hon. Gentleman's desire to decentralise the authority as far as possible, and in view also of the fact that commanding officers are wholly responsible for the state of the battalions under them, and are therefore the only persons who have sufficient knowledge of the facts, the right hon. Gentleman will reconsider his decision?

MR. BRODRICK: I cannot promise to do so. If an officer commanding is to be put in that position, every officer commanding other units, such as a battery of artillery, will also be in the same position. We cannot have some 200 or 300 different authorities dealing with cases of misconduct—we must have uniformity.

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

DR. THOMPSON (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he is aware that the training of the 3rd, 4th and 5th battalions of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers has been fixed for the 6th July; and whether, in view of the inconvenience of this date for both officers and men, he will state whether the commanding officers were consulted before a decision had been arrived at.

MR. BRODRICK: The time and places for such training are selected by the General Officer Commanding the district concerned, to whom the hon. Member should address any communications he may wish to make.

Militia Officers and War Rewards.

DR. THOMPSON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, in view of the fact that Reserve officers who have served for eighteen months with regiments in Great Britain and Ireland during the war in South Africa have been granted a step in rank, whether it is the intention of the Government to recognise the services rendered to their country by the Militia officers who served with the Regular forces during the whole period of the war.

MR. BRODRICK: The hon. Member refers to Militia officers who were attached at home for eighteen months to depôts, Regulars, remounts, etc., or who served with battalions other than their own in South Africa. His suggestion would be very difficult to adopt, as these officers would thereby be promoted over the heads of others who served in the war with their own battalions.

MR. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): How many of these Militia officers resigned their commissions when the war broke out in order to avoid going to South Africa?

No answer was returned.

Woolwich Arsenal Discharges.

*MR. CROOKS (Woolwich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state how many men have been discharged from or are under notice to leave Woolwich Arsenal since peace was proclaimed; and whether the men discharged or under notice are, in all cases, the extra men employed owing to the pressure of work during the war; and will he consider the possibility by a rearrangement of the orders for material and work of stopping the discharges.

MR. BRODRICK: One thousand three hundred and seventy-five have already gone on reduction since May 31 last, and about 1,000 are under notice to go. The men selected for discharge were those whom it was least desirable to retain, or whose work had actually died away. No practicable rearrangement of orders would stop discharges, as there is a general shrinkage of orders both for the trade and the ordnance factories. The heavy discharges now impending are due to the decision not to discharge men during the winter.

Native Labour in South Africa.

MR. GEORGE WHITE (Norfolk, N.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been directed to a letter from the rector of Thaba 'Nchu, South Africa, to the effect that a systematic impressing of natives for Government and other work is carried on in that district, and that he has had to sign papers certifying reasons why certain inhabitants ought to be excused from this press gang system; and whether he will take steps to have it stopped.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Lord STANLEY, Lancashire, Westhoughton): My right hon. friend the Secretary to the Colonies asks me to refer the hon. Member to his reply to a similar Question on the 23rd instant.†

Boy Recruits for the Navy.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether an application has been received from the parents of a boy named Casey, engaged as a second-class stoker on H.M.S. "Vivid," praying for his discharge on the plea that he was under age when he enlisted; and, if so, will he state whether it is intended to discharge this boy.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER, Belfast, W.): I have been unable to trace any such application, but if the hon. Member will send me the full details of the case it shall be enquired into.

Whiskey Adulteration.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will say what supervision, if any, the Government exercise in regard to the nature and quality of the whiskey and other spirits consumed by the public; if he has any official reports showing that the increase of lunacy and crime in this country is largely due to bad drink now being sold as genuine malt whiskey and brandy; whether he will cause inquiries to be made as to the laws in force in other countries for the protection of the public against the sale of deleterious blends and other objectionable alcoholic liquors; whether the Excise Department possess a record of the materials used in distillation by every distillery in the three kingdoms; and, if so, whether he will grant a Return showing the nature of those materials used by each distiller for the year 1903.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): The Government do not exercise any supervision as regards the nature and quality of the whiskey and other spirits consumed by the public, the provisions of the Food and Drugs Act in this connection being administered by the local authorities. I am not aware of any such reports as those to which the hon. and learned Member refers, and I do not think that a Return of the legislation in other countries would be likely to serve any useful purpose. The Revenue authorities possess a record of materials used in distillation, and the totals are published annually in the Statistical Abstract. A Return of the materials used by each individual distiller would be a very invidious one, and I cannot think it desirable.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Does not the right hon. Gentleman think that it is invidious for the reason that it might be published? Then the honest man would have a chance.

*MR. GROVES: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that there is a simple process by which in four hours an equivalent of two years maturing and perfect purity may be obtained?

MR. RITCHIE said he had no doubt that individual purchasers could easily procure pure spirits if they went about it, but he did not quite understand what the point of the hon. Member was.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Is not the difference that this stuff is not whiskey?

MR. T. M. HEALY: I beg also to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has any official reports showing that guarantees and statements as to age affixed by blenders to whiskey bottled in bond are often false or exaggerated; and, if so, will he explain why such marking of whiskey is allowed under Government auspices where age is a vital point; why the Revenue Boards of Customs and Excise refuse to officially guarantee the age of whiskey bottled in bond, which they know to be correct, but allow incorrect descriptions to be used by blenders; whether he is aware that certificates of analysis from leading analysts to give colour to frauds are often placed on the bottles, also under Government supervision; and whether he will issue instructions to put an end to all these practices in Government warehouses.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxix., 1440.

MR. RITCHIE: I am not aware of any such official reports as those to which the hon. and learned Member refers. The question of exercising control over labels affixed to goods in bond is one which cannot possibly be adequately discussed within the limits of an answer to a Question. The practice of the Revenue Boards is to limit themselves almost entirely to prohibiting the use of labels implying any Government guarantee of accuracy, and to preventing any gross misdescription of foreign spirits as British and *vice versâ.* I cannot undertake to alter this practice, for the reason (amongst others) that, the moment spirits have been taken out of bond, the control exercised by the Boards must cease.

MR. T. M. HEALY: May I ask whether a predecessor of the right hon. Gentleman, twelve or fifteen years ago, did not give a Special Committee to enquire into the entire question which led to important reforms, notably in the case of stamping out grogging, and whether the right hon. Gentleman will consider the desirability of a fresh enquiry to deal with the new evils which undoubtedly have cropped up.

MR. RITCHIE: I shall always be ready to consider any representations made to me in regard to any inquiry into this or any other matter, and if further communication between the hon. Gentleman and myself leads me to the conclusion that good would be derived from such an inquiry I shall be happy to consider the matter.

Restrictions on the Sale of Poisons.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will consider the advisability of introducing a Bill for the purpose of increasing the restrictions upon the sale of poisons.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. AKERS DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): The hon. Member will be aware that a Departmental Committee appointed by the Lord President of the Council recently reported on various questions relating to the sale of poisons, and that Report is now under consideration. Some of the recommendations of the Committee are in the direction indicated in the Question.

Coroners' Inquests (Railway Fatalities Bill.

MR. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to resolutions of the Trades Union Congress for several years past in support of the Coroners' Inquests (Railway Fatalities) Bill; and whether he will assent to the Second Reading of this Bill, and to its reference to a Select Committee.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BONAR LAW, Glasgow, Blackfriars): I can only repeat the answer given to the hon. Member by the President of the Board of Trade on the 2nd May, 1901, in which he intimated that he was not prepared to assent to the Second Reading of this Bill.†

Torrington St. Clements Schools.

MR. GEORGE WHITE (Norfolk, N.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether he is aware that the managers of the schools at Torrington St. Clements have determined to cease responsibility for these schools on the 31st March; and whether he will take steps to prevent the children being deprived of their education for the ensuing six months, and to free the parents from liability to prosecution for not sending their children to school.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Sir WILLIAM ANSON, Oxford University): The Board of Education are still in communication with the managers. In their opinion the financial position of the schools is such that the managers should be able to carry them on up to September 30th without incurring any personal loss; and they are not without hope that the schools may yet be kept open until they can be taken over by the local education authority.

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† See (4) *Debates*, xciii., 434

But the Board of Education has no power to compel the managers to keep open the schools if they have no funds available for the purpose. With regard to the last part of the Question, the fact that there was no school available would be a reasonable excuse for non-attendance under the by-laws.

MR. GEORGE WHITE: But the Board of Education have the ultimate authority in this matter, and as the managers have definitely determined not to go on with the school, cannot some scheme be devised whereby 600 children will not be deprived of their education?

SIR WILLIAM ANSON: The powers of the Board are limited by law, but they will do all that is possible.

Jury Challenging in Ireland.

MR. FLYNN (Cork Co., N.): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that during the proceedings at the Cork Spring Assizes in the case of Andrew Moore, charged with the offence of murder, fifty-seven jurors were ordered to stand by on behalf of the Crown; and, if so, will he say whether this action was taken with the sanction of the Irish law officers.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. ATKINSON, Londonderry, N.): Fifteen jurors were challenged by the prisoner, and fifty-five were, by the Crown solicitor, acting in pursuance of the circular of February, 1894, ordered to stand aside. No special directions were given by the law officers.

MR. FLYNN: Was not this prisoner a Catholic? Will the right hon. Gentleman give instructions to put an end to this practice?

MR. ATKINSON: I believe both the prisoner and the deceased were Protestants. No instructions will be given to stop the practice.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): How long are these scandals to be committed?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Cork Magistracy.

MR. SHEEHAN (Cork Co., Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether consideration will be given to any representations which may be made by local public bodies on the subject of the appointment of a justice of the peace in the room of the late Mr. Benjamin Leader, Stakehill, Millstreet, County Cork.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): Recommendations for the Commission of the Peace are made to the Lieutenant of the county, who is always ready to consider the names of properly qualified persons brought under his notice.

Scotch Licensing Bill and Consolidation Bill.

MR. BLACK (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate when he proposes to take the Second Readings of the Scotch Licensing Bill and the Consolidation Bill.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): The arrangements as to public business are such as to preclude the possibility of the Second Reading being taken next week, but I am hopeful that it may be taken on an early day of the week following.

Convict John R. O'Sullivan.

MR. SHEEHAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a memorial for transmission to His Excellency Earl Dudley, praying for the release of John R. O'Sullivan, a prisoner undergoing two sentences of penal servitude in Maryborough Gaol of fourteen years; and whether, in view of the circumstances of the case, of the good conduct of the prisoner during his first sentence of fourteen years, and of the peaceable state of the country, he will recommend to the Lord Lieutenant that the remainder of the sentence on this prisoner should be remitted.

MR. WYNDHAM: The memorial has been received and will be submitted to the Lord Lieutenant in the ordinary course. It does not come within my province to make a recommendation to the effect suggested.

Kildysert Police.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland at what date Constables Brien and M'Lean, of the Royal Irish Constabulary at Kildysert were suspended from duty; and when their trial for perjury is to take place.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The suspension took effect on the 19th instant. The magisterial investigation into the charge preferred against the defendants was adjourned to Ennis Petty Sessions to-day.

Clare Castle Harbour.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received representations as to the unsatisfactory state of Clare Castle Harbour; and whether he will consider the advisability of carrying out the recommendations made by the Harbour Commissioners.

Mr. WYNDHAM: One of the Harbour Trustees, who made inquiry, was informed that any representations they desired to make should be submitted in writing. But no representations have yet been received.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: But I handed them in some time ago in writing.

Mr. WYNDHAM: If so, they must have been overlooked in the pressure of business. I will make further inquiry.

Newmarket (Cork) Licensing Prosecutions.

Mr. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the number of prosecutions under the Licensing Acts brought by Constable Jeremiah Brennan, at Newmarket (County Cork) Petty Sessions, which were dismissed between 1st January, 1902, and 13th March, 1903; and whether, seeing that this constable has applied for a favourable report from his authorities in connection with these prosecutions, he will state from what fund are the costs of such prosecutions defrayed; and what action the constabulary authorities intend to take in regard to this policeman.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The number of persons prosecuted by this constable under the Licensing Acts in the period stated was 142, resulting in 113 convictions and twenty-nine dismissals. There has been a material decrease in drunkenness at Newmarket during the past year, due mainly to the action of Constable Brennan, to whose zeal and energy the local clergy have borne high testimony. No costs were incurred by these prosecutions. The constable's application for a favourable record will be considered by the Reward Board.

Knocknagree Licensing Prosecutions.

Mr. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has yet been called to the evidence of Acting Sergeant Hourihane, at Charleville Petty Sessions, on the 2nd instant, as to the allegation that he was unsuccessful in a number of prosecutions under the Licensing Act at Knocknagree in August and September, 1902; and whether, seeing that five licensing prosecutions initiated by this policeman were dismissed at the Knocknagree Petty Sessions Court, the Constabulary authorities will take steps to inquire into the conduct of this constable.

*Mr. WYNDHAM: Five prosecutions instituted by this sergeant under the Licensing Acts were dismissed at petty sessions. But the fact in no way reflects upon the sergeant.

In reply to a further Question the right hon. Gentleman said he thought the sergeant acted in good faith, and that he had no reason to believe that his zeal outran his discretion.

Belfast Meat Contracts.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the contracts for supplying meat to the Belfast Union Workhouse, the Belfast Asylum, and the Antrim Asylum were last year given by the governing bodies of those institutions to one contractor, Mrs. M'Bride, of York Street, Belfast, at prices for the three institutions respectively of 44s. per cwt., 5¾d. per lb., and 6½d. per lb.; and that a flesher named Robert Burke, of Cromac Street, Belfast, tendered for the contracts at the prices respectively of 41s. per cwt., 5¼d. per lb. and 5½d. per lb., but that although his tender was the lowest it was rejected; and whether, in view of the loss to the ratepayers and of the fact that, notwithstanding the Local Government Act, 1902, the Committee this year again gave the contract to Mrs. M'Bride at a price in excess of that quoted by Mr. Burke of five-eighths of a penny per lb., the Local Government Board will order a sworn inquiry; and will he explain why action is not taken in this case such as was taken recently by the Crown against the Mullingar Board of Guardians.

MR. WYNDHAM: I have no information in respect of the Asylum contracts for the present year; otherwise the facts appear to be as stated. The Local Government Board has no power to order a sworn inquiry respecting the acceptance of tenders by the governing bodies of lunatic asylums. There is no analogy between the action of the Belfast and the Mullingar Guardians. The former rejected the lowest tender because the names of the persons proposed as sureties were unknown to them, and they did not consider that the contract could be satisfactorily carried out at the lower prices quoted.

Robbery at Tralee Barracks.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that safes were opened in the Royal Irish Constabulary Barracks in Tralee on the 28th February, and several sums of money taken; and whether, in view of the fact that similar incidents occurred in the same barracks twelve months ago, when a private inquiry was held, he will state the findings of this inquiry, and order a public inquiry to investigate the recent incidents.

MR. WYNDHAM: There is no safe in the Tralee Barracks, and nothing is known of the alleged theft of money on 28th February. Complaints were made in November that small sums had been taken from the boxes of two constables, but no evidence against any person was forthcoming and no complaints have since been made. The inquiry held twelve months ago had no connection with alleged larcenies.

Administration of Irish Housing Acts.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that, under the provisions of the Labourers (Ireland) Acts and the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, it is very often necessary for the local authorities to lodge in court small sums of money awarded for compensation, with the result that costs larger in amount than the moneys so dealt with are occasioned to the ratepayers; and whether he will consider the expediency of proposing during the present session some amendment of the law by which costs in such cases may be avoided or minimised.

MR. WYNDHAM: The course objected to is followed in all cases of compulsory purchase of lands under Railway Acts, Public Health Acts, etc., where the sums payable as compensation are also frequently of small amount. There seems no special reason for altering the law in this respect in regard to lands required for labourers' or artisans' dwellings, and in any event I could not undertake to deal with the matter during the present session.

Lettir (Kerry) School.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state when the application for the building of a new school at Lettir, near Glenbeigh, County Kerry, was first submitted; on what date was the information conveyed to the manager that, owing to the drawing up of new plans for national schools, the building could not be proceeded with; and whether he can now say that building operations can be commenced at Lettir, so that the school will be ready for use before next winter.

MR. WYNDHAM: The application was received in January, 1899; the necessary forms of particulars were not, however, completed by the manager until May, 1901. In March, 1902, a grant was conditionally sanctioned. In respect to the concluding inquiry I would refer to my reply to the next Question on the Paper.

Irish National School Plans.

MR. BOLAND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Report of the Building Committee on the new plans for national schools in Ireland was submitted in November last to the Government, and that, pending the Government's decision on the subject, all grants for new schools have been suspended; and whether a decision will soon be come to, so that progress may be made in regard to plans submitted to the National Board.

MR. WYNDHAM: The Report referred to is a confidential document. Action on applications for building grants was necessarily postponed pending a decision on the Report of the Committee. I hope, however, that a decision will be reached very shortly.

Gortnasate Harbour.

*MR. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is intended to complete the approach road to Gortnasate Harbour under the provisions of the Marine Works Act; and whether, in view of the fact that a large part of the male population of the district will, if work be not provided during this summer in the neighbourhood of their homes, migrate to Scotland within the next few weeks, it is intended to commence immediately the works contemplated at Gortnasate and Falchorrib.

MR. WYNDHAM: I have made proposals to the County Council in respect to works at both places named. Some little time may elapse before an agreement is reached with the Council If an agreement is concluded, the approach road at Gortnasate must be made under the provisions of the Act, but not necessarily from its funds.

Belfast Sorting Office.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he will explain why the duty of book officer has been entrusted to a boy in the sorting office at Belfast; and whether, in view of the effect of this appointment on the performance of their duties by the senior men, he will take steps to have the duty placed in the hands of a supervising officer as it is elsewhere.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, Worcestershire, E.): I have caused inquiry to be made as to the facts of the case at Belfast, and as soon as I receive a full report I will communicate with the hon. Member. But I do not accept the view that the duty in question is proper to a supervising officer.

Thefts from the Belfast Post Office.

MR. SLOAN: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been called to thefts from the cloak room in the Belfast sorting office, and to the fact that compensation has been refused, although the property stolen had been entrusted to the keeping of the postal authorities in terms of the regulations; and will he state why a lock provided by the sorting staff with the consent of the Postmaster was removed from the cloak room door by the department.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: Two cases were reported in October last in which a coat was alleged to have been stolen from the sorters' retiring room at the Belfast post office; but though full inquiry was made no trace of the coat or of the thief could be found. Some of the staff are provided with small lockers, and more will be supplied during the present year. The staff are allowed to leave coats, etc., in their retiring rooms; but the Department undertakes no liability in respect of articles so left. The lock referred to was put on the retiring room door by the staff in 1893; but it had to be removed recently, because some members of the staff refused to provide themselves with keys.

Inch Strand—County Kerry.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will furnish a copy of the Report of the inspector who, at the request of the Board of Trade, visited Inch Strand, County Kerry.

Mr. BONAR LAW: No inspector has been sent by the Board of Trade to Inch Strand, but the Navigating Officer of H.M.S. "Collingwood" reported that he had made a survey and forwarded a map, on which is marked the high-water line, as noted by him on the day of his visit. This map is at the office of the Board of Trade, and I shall be happy to give directions that it shall be produced to the hon. Member, if he cares to inspect it.

Mr. FLAVIN: Surely in a matter of such vital importance as the stopping up of a public road, there ought to be a Report?

Straw Island Lights.

Mr. JOYCE (Limerick): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will explain why the sectoring of Straw Island, South Arran, and Roancarrig lights have not been adjusted to bring them into agreement with the description in the Admiralty charts and light lists; or will he state whether notices detailing the inaccuracies have been issued to mariners.

Mr. BONAR LAW: I have been informed that the sectors of these lights are cut as sharply as practicable, so as to agree with the description given in the Admiralty charts and light lists. In this connection it may be as well to draw attention to the warning concerning cuts or sectors of lights, printed in all copies of the Admiralty light lists.

Margaretta Shoals, Galway Bay.

Mr. JOYCE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can say if a notice to mariners was issued after the changes were made in the character of the buoys marking the Margaretta Shoals, Galway Bay; and, if so, on what date it was issued, and where is it obtainable.

Mr. BONAR LAW: A notice giving particulars of the intended alteration in the character of the Margaretta buoys was given on the 1st of November, 1897, and as the alterations were carried out in accordance with this notice, no second notice was issued after the changes were made. A copy of the notice can be obtained at the offices of the Board of Trade.

Kingstown East Pier Lights.

Mr. MOONEY (Dublin Co., S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will explain why the sectoring and flashing power of the Kingstown East Pier Light has not yet been brought into conformity with the description of it as given in the light lists.

Mr. BONAR LAW: I am informed by the Commissioners of Irish Lights that, finding it impracticable to render the sector accurate in the Kingstown East Pier Light, they have decided to place an unwatched light on Muglins Rock, and that, when this is established the sector in the Kingstown Light will be discontinued.

Irish Lights Board Boats.

Mr. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the fact that the Irish Lights Board boat "Princess Alexandra" was laid up at Liverpool for about twelve months, he will state how many of the crew and officers were retained on board and for how long; were they employed, and, if so, at what work; whether any of them were on leave, and, if so, what wages and allowance did they receive; and whether, seeing that the "Tearaght" is now laid up for repairs on the Clyde, he will state how many officers and men are kept on board.

Mr. BONAR LAW: I am informed by the Commissioners of Irish Lights that the officers and crew were retained on board the "Princess Alexandra" at Liverpool for about six months, until the chartering of the s.s. "Cragside," when all were transferred to that vessel except the engineer and two firemen, who remained to take care of the vessel and the machinery. The Commissioners state that, while at Liverpool, the crew were engaged in assisting in opening out and preparing the vessel for survey, and frequently transferring her from one berth to another, as required by the harbour authorities. All the officers and crew of the "Tearaght," except the second officer, are employed at various kinds of work on board, which can only be done during an overhaul. The second officer is engaged on coast work.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR: Can the hon. Gentleman give any reason why these boats should not be repaired in Irish ports?

No answer was returned.

London Education Bill.

DR. MACNAMARA (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he is yet in a position to say when the London Education Bill will be introduced.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I can give no definite indication of the date when the London Education Bill will be introduced; indeed, I must qualify a statement I have before made that it will be brought in before Easter. I rather think it will not.

Ministers in Attendance.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, do His Majesty's Government propose to introduce any change into the constitutional practice that a Cabinet Minister responsible to Parliament shall be in personal attendance on the Sovereign when absent either from the neighbourhood of the Metropolis or from the British dominions; and, if so, on what ground is that change proposed to be made.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not think there has been that rigid practice my hon. friend assumes. I am not aware that there is any proof of it. Certainly, during the reign of the late Queen it was not the invariable practice for the Sovereign to be accompanied by a Minister in attendance.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I gather that my hon. friend is not prepared to make any change in the constitutional practice.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Oh, certainly. I do not in the least desire to change a constitutional practice.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): Can the right hon. Gentleman give us some rough idea what the business will be before Easter?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Army and Navy Votes will be put down for Monday, the Contracts and Victualling Votes for the afternoon sitting, and at the evening sitting I shall endeavour to make the Votes as uncontroversial as possible. On Tuesday the main business will be the Butter Bill, and the Army Annual Bill will be put down for that day. On Wednesday I propose to ask the House to get the Speaker out of the Chair to go into Committee on the Civil Service Estimates. The first Motion stands in the name of an hon. Member from Ireland, and he imagines the debate will occupy the afternoon. Going on with the Motion on Thursday, I hope to get the Speaker out of the Chair at the end of the evening sitting. I expect to take the Scotch Licensing Bill on Monday the 6th.

LIGHT LOCOMOTIVES (IRELAND) BILL.

Lords Amendments to be considered forthwith; considered and agreed to.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Reported, with Amendments, from the Standing Committee on Law, etc.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 97.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 97.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 122.]

NEW BILLS.

PHARMACY BILL.

"To alter and amend the Pharmacy Acts, 1852 to 1868," presented by Mr. Lough; supported by Mr. Marshall Hall, Mr. Remnant, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Ellis Griffith, Mr. Wanklyn, Mr. Tomkinson, and Mr. Osmond Williams; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 123.]

SMALL DWELLINGS (ACQUISITION) BILL.

"To amend the provisions of the Small Dwellings Acquisition Act, 1899," presented by Sir Thomas Wrightson; supported by Mr. Claude Hay, Mr. Graham, Mr. Peel, Sir Alfred Hickman, Captain Jessel, Mr. Moon, and Mr. Pike Pease; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 6th May, and to be printed. [Bill 124.]

SUPPLY.

[4TH ALLOTTED DAY.]

Considered in Committee:—

(In the Committee.)

[Mr JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1903–4.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £1,920,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the charge for the Staff for Engineer Services, and Expenditure for Royal Engineer Works, Buildings, and Repairs, at Home and Abroad (including Purchases), which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904.

*SIR A. HAYTER (Walsall) asked for information in reference to the increase in the number of military clerks and temporary clerks for the staff service. There had been an addition of forty-three, and an addition of £15,000 annually to the Estimates, and he thought the Committee ought to know the reason for it. As to the unfortunate accident which had occurred at the house of the Commander-in-Chief at Aldershot, he considered that the amount taken in the Votes for rebuilding was insufficient and would like to know if the contract for £5,000 had been signed. He also asked for information as to the amount proposed to be expended with regard to the building in connection with the frozen meat store at Gibraltar, and also as to the additional £15,700 for the purchase of land and the use to which the latter was to be applied. Was any of the land intended for rifle ranges or manœuvres?

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE (Bristol, E.) said he had understood from an answer which he received to a Question, that no decision had been come to with regard to the Committee over which Lord Esher presided, which considered the duties of the Royal Engineers. He did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman had finally made up his mind to lay that Report on the Table of the House. He thought it was clear that the duties now demanded from the Royal Engineers might be far better carried out by the Civil Engineers. The greater part of the money spent under this Vote was expended on barracks, and it would be far better that this work should be taken out of the hands of the Royal Engineers and put out to contract, under the supervision of skilled engineer officers. Skill in the construction of roads and sewers was not necessarily compatible with an accurate knowledge of fortification building.

*COLONEL WELBY (Taunton) asked for information as to the present condition of the hospital near Alton, which had been provided by subscribers to a newspaper, and intended for use in connection with the late war. His information was that it was put to no use up to the present, and that it was, in fact, a refuge for partridges from adjacent estates. Such an excellent gift as this was ought to be put to more useful purposes.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.) said that although this Vote provided for ranges, barracks, and other requisites for the Army, provision was made for exactly similar work under the Military Works Act. It had been assumed that £2,000,000 would be asked for under that Act this year, making with this Vote the sum of nearly £4,000,000—a huge sum indeed for works of this character. They were being kept in the dark as to what was to be done under the Military Works Act, and he did not think the Committee ought to pass this Vote without knowing the total sum the Government intended to expend in this direction. Ten years ago the Vote was only £684,000; now the demand was three times as great. It had actually doubled within the last five years. This year the amount asked for was £1,920,000; of which it was explained that £100,000 was in connection with the war; therefore the net Vote was £1,820,000, or an increase of £286,000 on the huge figures of last year. He was an economist, and tried to inquire into these increases. Some of his hon. friends did not agree with him when he endeavoured to inquire into increases for the Navy; but they said that they would do everything in their power to inquire into increases in connection with the Army. This was a very serious matter, as it concerned a branch of expenditure which had been swollen more than any other during the last ten years. They had the Barracks Act ten years ago, and it had been succeeded by successive Military Works Bills; yet in spite of all the provision which had been made under these special Bills the House was now asked to vote this enormous Estimate. The Secretary of State for War issued a Memorandum explaining these increases, but it was of a most meagre nature. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman to give the Committee further particulars, and to justify the policy connected with such huge Estimates. The right hon. Gentleman said that £125,000 was due to the automatic growth of the charges for interest under these large military loans. But that left a sum of £161,000; and that huge increase ought not to be granted without the Committee getting further information. He thought the right hon. Gentleman should explain to the House the principle upon which the Government meant to proceed. If hon. Members would examine the accounts which had been laid before Parliament, they would find that expenditure under the Military Works Act covered the very same ground as the Vote they were now discussing. The same barracks and the same districts were mentioned; and not the slightest reason was given for treating one part of the expenditure at, for instance, Aldershot under the Military Works Act, and the other in the Estimates. If hon. Members would look at the Act they would find small sums of £20, £200, and repairs amounting to £192. Why should they borrow money to pay for repairs amounting to £192? The whole thing was a huge muddle.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford) said they did not borrow for repairs.

MR. LOUGH said that, of course, he would accept the right hon. Gentleman's statement, but some of the items under the Military Works Act were exceedingly small, and covered the same ground as the Estimates. They did not know the principle which directed the Government in choosing between the two courses, and they were placed in a very difficult position in considering the matter. The real reason why the Government refused to bring in the Military Works Bill was that it did not know how much they were going to ask the House for, and how much they were going to spend. There would be no economy in the country as long as the House did not insist on having all the Estimates in advance, in order that hon. Members would have time to consider them. The Committee ought to pause, and ask for some justification of the extraordinary amount of the Vote, and also the reason why the secret of the Government had been kept so well with regard to the other head. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman to relieve the situation by withdrawing the Vote until the Military Works Bill was brought in.

MR. BRODRICK said that the Military Works Bill was for the construction of large barracks. The Vote before the Committee was for repairs and maintenance.

MR. LOUGH said there were new works included in the Vote. He did not think the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman was satisfactory; and the Committee ought to know what the expenditure on new works was going to be. He did not know what the policy of the Government with regard to the Army would be; but if any attention was to be paid to representation from hon. Members on that side, as well as on the other side, and if there was a considerable reduction, then so many barracks would not be required. The whole policy of the Government ought to be explained before this huge Vote was agreed to; and in order to afford an opportunity, he would move a reduction of the Vote by £161,000, the amount of the increase.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £1,759,000, be granted for the said service."—(*Mr. Lough.*)

MR. COURTENAY WARNER (Staffordshire, (Lichfield) said he thoroughly supported everything his hon. friend had said. The Military Works Bill and the Vote before the Committee were connected with the supply of barracks, rifle ranges, and such things, and they could not make a division and say that the Bill was for new works, and the Vote for old works. Some very considerable sums were asked for new works in the Vote; but he agreed it did not make the least difference whether a new barracks was built or an old one repaired. The object was the same; and he did not think it was possible to draw a line between the Military Works Bill and the Vote. He was quite sure the War Office would not be able to draw a line in such a case. He would take one item to show the impossibility of discussing the Vote properly. Rifle ranges came under the Vote, but they did not know how much was going to be spent on them, as the Vote simply said that a certain sum of money would be spent on barracks and rifle ranges. There was nothing to show how many rifle ranges were going to be constructed In his own constituency the military authorities sanctioned a rifle range six years ago, but it had not yet been constructed, and there were hundreds of similar cases throughout the country. If there was another sudden demand for Yeomanry, they would again be raw and untrained levies, as the right hon. Gentleman said the second lot of Yeomanry who were sent to South Africa were. The most important point in the training of the men was the provision of rifle ranges; but they had no information as to what was being done. Rifle ranges ought to be constructed under the Military Works Bill; but they had no knowledge as to how many rifle ranges were to be constructed. They had a vague statement from the right hon. Gentleman the other day that the Vote only included sums under £2,000; but there was nothing about that in the Estimates.

The Estimates last year were not very full owing to the war; but they contained more details than were given this year. They had no details, but simply this statement that there was to be this general expenditure at Aldershot or in the Southern District! Was this money to be spent on rifle ranges, new barracks, roads, or what? No indication had been given of how the money was going to be spent. It was merely a lump sum put down. It was, no doubt, a very convenient method so far as the War Office was concerned, but it was anything but convenient to the Committee. He hoped before the Vote was passed members of the Committee would insist upon some particulars being given. Even if details had been given as in past years, they would have been made illusory, seeing that the main Bill, the Military Works Bill, was not yet introduced, much less printed. He did not say the Military Works Bill ought to have been carried before this Vote was brought in, but it ought, at least, to have been printed, so that the Committee might know what was going to be done. He hoped his hon. friend would press his Motion to a division, and he would certainly support him, unless the Vote was put off until another day. He wished to see these matters discussed before they came to discuss the Military Works Bill. The whole value of the Army and Reserve forces depended on their capacity for shooting; their being good or bad shots depended entirely upon their having sufficient ranges to practice on. There had not been sufficient ranges for years past, and there were not sufficient at the present time. He asked if the noble Lord would, under the circumstances, issue a return of the new rifle ranges opened in the past two or three years, and also of those which had been closed in the like period, and what ranges were under consideration and likely to be opened in the next few years.

This was a most important point, and the mere putting down of a lump sum was no guide to what was being done.

Mr. WHITLEY (Halifax) said he was glad his hon. friend had moved the reduction on the whole Vote, in order that the Committee might discuss the magnitude of this and similar Votes before going into the details. Two years ago he had ventured to predict that when the war was over every Department would retain a large portion of the increase which was said to be due to the war. Time had proved that to be true. They were not going back to the normal expenditure, and drastic steps would have to be taken by the Committee before they got back to the normal conditions of finance. The only way to do that was for the Committee to tell the War Office that they could do so much and no more, and they must provide the best Army they could with it. Individually, he thought, under those conditions we should get as good, or a better, Army than we had at present. These items were mounting up year by year, and the country was getting into a hopeless condition. The Committee had been told that there was to be a Military Works Bill, but they had not been told what the amount or purpose of it was, and they would not hear of it until they found this £20,000,000 was incorporated in it. These Military Works Bills were never intended to be anything else than the rarest occurrences in this House, and were intended to provide for such excess expenditure as could not be put on the Votes.

Mr. BRODRICK said it had been stated over and over again the permanent loans would be asked for in this way, and not put upon the Estimates.

Mr. WHITLEY said that might be true, because in recent years the War Office had tried to put as much as possible on posterity, and as little as possible on the taxpayers. With regard to these Military Works Bills being intended to be of rare occurrence, he would point out that in 1890 there was a Bill which authorised the expenditure of £4,100,000, and the reason he looked at this matter so seriously was that in his belief the top limit of payments authorised by these Bills had not been reached. After the Bill of 1890 there was a lapse of seven years. In 1897 there was a Military Works Bill——

The DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN said the hon. Member must confine his remarks to the Estimates before the House. At present he was discussing the Military Works Bill which was not before the Committee.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee), with submission, pointed out that the Committee had been given to understand in both the Navy and Army Votes, under the head of annuities, that it was competent to discuss the progress of these Acts.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN said the hon. Member would be in order in discussing the annuities under the Acts, but he understood that he was discussing the Acts themselves.

Mr. COURTENAY WARNER submitted that the hon. Member had been discussing these Acts only so far as they referred to the items which these Acts covered.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN said the hon. Member would have been quite in order in pointing out that a great deal of money had been spent under these Acts, but the Committee was now discussing the Estimates and not the Military Works Acts.

Mr. WHITLEY said he was only discussing these Acts with direct reference to what were called the annuities in respect of the money borrowed. In the years 1899, 1900, and 1901, no less than £15,000,000 were borrowed by means of Military Works Acts, and now they were told, in addition to the £19,000,000 already authorised in that manner since 1890, another Bill was to be presented to the House. He agreed with the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, who said the moment the war was over we ought to be careful to restore the Sinking Fund, and he hoped that would be done. At the same time he thought we ought to be extremely careful not to put to capital expenditure that which we ought to put to annual expenditure. His objection to the continued introduction of Military Works Bills was first of all that the sums there were earmarked, and that it was a great mistake to spend this money on bricks and mortar rather than on guns and so forth, and secondly that this country was being led into a position which would result in a violent reaction in the future. We were piling up liabilities from which we could not hope to escape for the next fifteen or sixteen years. For that reason he was extremely glad that this Amendment had been moved, and he thought that discussion as to the details should be postponed.

COLONEL PILKINGTON (Lancashire, Newton) said that in the Vote there were two large sums of £148,000 and £432,000 respectively for barracks and rifle ranges. The question of rifle ranges was most important, because troops were no use unless they were good shots. The provision of rifle ranges for Regulars, Militia, and Yeomanry was very inadequate, and a scheme of thoroughly equipping the forces in this respect would have been well worth the attention of the Government. In thickly populated districts the cost of land and other items rendered the provision of ranges a more costly matter, but in other places it was not a very serious business. He hoped the Secretary of State would supply the information asked for by the hon. Member for Lichfield with regard to the intentions of the Government in the matter.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Lord STANLEY, Lancashire, Westhoughton) said there appeared to be a slight misapprehension as to the purposes of this Vote. It was not for the provision of new ranges, but for the upkeep of existing ranges and any small expansions necessary to make those ranges safe. The cost of new ranges was treated as capital expenditure and raised by loan.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER asked whether the small expenditure for replacing ranges which had been closed would not come under this Vote.

LORD STANLEY did not think it would. Such expenditure would legitimately be treated as capital expenditure. His right hon. friend the Secretary of State was perfectly ready to make a return of the ranges which had been closed and of those reprovided, but it would not be advisable to name the ranges at present under discussion, as that might render yet more difficult the task of purchasing the necessary land. With regard to the rebuilding of Government House, he was not certain to whom the contract was given, but the House was at present in process of rebuilding, which process it was hoped would be finished by the end of the year. All the foundations and so forth were still intact, so that the £5,000 asked for merely represented the cost of reconstruction above the ground floor, and it was believed that that sum would be sufficient. His Majesty the King had placed the Royal Pavilion at General French's disposal during the process of rebuilding, otherwise another house would have had to be provided. He could not go into the question of insuring Government property, but, in his opinion, such a course would involve a great loss.

The land for the purchase of which money was being taken was not at Salisbury Plain, but chiefly at Plumstead and Cork. The Committee to which the hon. Member for Bristol had referred was appointed last autumn, and its Report involved a very radical change in the whole of the Building Department; therefore he thought the Committee would not expect him to give any details until the whole scheme could be submitted. He could, however, say that as a general principle it was intended that the Big Building Department, although perhaps nominally under, should be a separate Department from that of the Inspector-General of Fortifications, and that the engineer officers engaged therein should be employed not for short, but for definite and long periods, or even permanently in that department. They could then be held responsible for any particular work, and if anything went wrong the authorities would know whom to blame, because one man would be responsible for the work from beginning to end, and there would be none of that chopping and changing between people in authority which in the past had undoubtedly led to much waste of expenditure. That was the general principle, but the details would require a great deal of threshing out before they could be laid before Parliament. As to laying the Report on the Table, he did not think it could be laid down that where the head of a Department asked for a Report to assist him in his work he should be compelled always to lay that Report before Parliament. The Report was meant for the private information of the Minister, to enable him to frame the best scheme, and to publish all Departmental Reports would be rather a dangerous policy.

The hon. Member for Taunton had asked about Alton Hospital. There had been some difficulty as to the terms on which it should be handed over, but that difficulty had been satisfactorily overcome. Certain works were necessary, including the construction of a branch line to run to the hospital. Whether a part of the building would be used for any other purpose he was not certain, but as a general rule it would be utilised as a permanent convalescent hospital for the forces at Aldershot, and perhaps for those in London. The hon. Member for West Islington had complained of lack of information with regard to the loan. But the figures in this Vote could not be in any way affected by the loan. The money now asked for was for making small alterations and additions such as would not come on the loan. It was also for the general upkeep of the service, and might be affected by past loans, but it could not be affected by future loans. The increase was, of course, due to the fact that there were more barracks to look after and maintain, and that public opinion now insisted, and rightly so, on a higher standard with regard to barracks. The whole system of drainage, which in the past had got into a deplorable state, had had to be practically reconstructed. All these things were necessary, but they cost money, and it would be found that the vast majority of the sums asked for in the Estimates this year were for necessary, and generally sanitary, arrangements in the various barracks.

MR. WHITLEY asked how much it was proposed to borrow this year.

LORD STANLEY said that information would be given when the Bill was introduced.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) believed that item (K), amounting to £552,900, did not depend in the least on the amount of money spent on barracks, but had to do with the loans. The Vote, and especially the part of it representing the loans with which Item (K) was concerned, had largely to do with fortifications. If one thing more than another had been taught by the recent war it was that fortifications might become, not only useless, but absolutely dangerous, and that, as a matter of fact, the intelligent commander of the future would keep as far as possible away from any fortifications whatever. The introduction of smokeless power had rendered it essential that there should be nothing in the nature of a line of fortifications to mark the place from which firing was proceeding, consequently he would have expected to hear the announcement that the War Office had renounced all idea of making fortifications in the future.

He was prepared to hear the defence now to be made for these fortifications which so distinctly marked their positions. Their late enemies in South Africa never used fortifications, and he believed that was one of the reasons for their success. The fortifications proposed to be erected around London had been surrounded by a certain amount of mystery, and he thought they ought to be reconsidered, and probably abandoned. It was generally known that fortifications were being put somewhere, but nobody seemed to know exactly where, and he should be very grateful for some information about them. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would tell them whether he intended reconsidering the policy of erecting permanent fortifications. What were the eastern defences of the Channel to be? He should have thought they would have been the sand at the entrance of the River

Thames, and the ships that would lie in the river. Apparently it was also intended to erect some fortifications at Chatham, for on page 70 he noticed there was an item of £136,000 altogether for this purpose.

MR. BRODRICK: There is only £500 taken this year, and £133,000 has already been spent.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said he was aware that the greater part had already been expended, but the right hon. Gentleman proposed to spend a small sum from this year's Estimates. He thought that was a mistake, and he suggested that the time had arrived when the Secretary of State for War should reconsider the policy of fortifications altogether. What did he propose to do about the fortifications around London? The right hon. Gentleman had told the world that he wanted 100,000 men to defend London and some other positions. Was he going to put those men behind fortifications? If so, instead of increasing their safety, he would increase their danger.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) said that the so-called fortifications of London were little more than defended store-houses. Most of the expenditure which had been recently undertaken had been at Berehaven and similar naval bases, and he knew nothing of what had been done at Chatham. In this country they had been a little behind in regard to fortifications. It was a very curious fact that on the Continent in recent years all the guns had been put outside the fortifications. They were not allowed to go to them, but they could see enough from the water to convince them that the guns had been mounted away from the fortifications in the sand. He agreed with the hon. Member for King's Lynn that this country was somewhat behindhand in this respect, and they were still allowing British engineers to erect fortifications with the guns inside, while other countries were putting their guns away from the fortifications.

*CAPTAIN JESSEL (St. Pancras, S.) said that the hon. Member for Halifax had expressed his approval of the men and the guns, but what was he going to do with the men? Was he going to house them inside the guns? How were they going to manage if they had not got proper barracks? Hon. Members opposite were always full of the cry about the necessity of housing the working classes, and, after all, a soldier was as much a working man as anybody else, and it was quite right that barracks should be very much improved. He had been much interested in the speech of the Financial Secretary to the War Office. He told them that a very important recommendation had been taken with regard to the officers of Engineers, and that in future it was intended to have a separate branch for construction of barracks. How could Engineer officers be expected to be architects, as at one moment they were doing telegraph or telephone work, and another day they were looking after the drains or building a fort? It seemed to him that it would be very much better to take the bull by the horns, and employ civilians altogether, as he questioned whether the Engineers could obtain the necessary training at Chatham. The Financial Secretary said that a good deal of the money asked for was to be spent upon drainage works. As far as he understood the question, barracks were never inspected until a crisis such as typhoid fever occurred, and the Government did not allow the ordinary sanitary inspector to enter within the sacred precincts of the barracks. There would be a very different state of affairs if the sanitary inspector were allowed to go round, for then a great many of the barracks in the large towns would be condemned. This kind of thing went on until an epidemic broke out, and then a wholesale reconstruction took place. A stitch in time saved nine, and in nothing was this more true than in the case of drains and sanitary arrangement. He wished to call attention to the terrible state of ventilation and overcrowding in the married quarters in barracks. He had heard of a case at Gravesend where a corporal and his wife and five children lived in one room and an inquest was held on one of the children. If such a case occurred in civil life, there would be a tremendous outcry. He hoped the War Office would do all that was possible to prevent overcrowding. He did not know whether the Secretary of State for War would be able to tell them how far he had progressed with cubicles, and what success had attended them. He had always been an supporter of the policy of the War Office in this respect, as he considered that the life of the soldier inside barracks should be made a great deal more comfortable. For years the soldiers in India had had a separate dining-room apart from their sleeping-room, and he hoped that in the new barracks a similar provision would be made. The other side to the question was that when a soldier went into modern barracks and was afterwards removed into some old barracks, he was often very discontented. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would continue this beneficent policy, and he should be glad to hear how far the experiment with regard to cubicles had been a success from a military point of view. With regard to the lighting in most barrack rooms, there was one solitary gas jet for a large room with about thirty to forty men in it, and nothing was more melancholy than to go into one of these rooms at night. He ventured to think that the electric light might be introduced with advantage. He should be glad to know whether the new hospital on the Millbank site was to be used for teaching purposes in connection with the new medical school in London. It seemed to him that it was rather a mistake to put a hospital so near the river. He thought that a healthier site might have been got. He should like to know whether it was absolutely necessary to build so many barracks at our great military centres. It seemed to him that if they went on building barracks at Salisbury and Aldershot there would be absolutely no room left for the troops to manœuvre. The numerous small depôts all over the country, and especially in large towns, were expensive to maintain and useless for military purposes. In Birmingham there were barracks in the centre of the town which were formerly used for cavalry and now used for artillery. It took a considerable time for troops to get outside of the town from these barracks. It would be a good thing to abolish military barracks in the centre of towns, sell the sites, and, with the money so obtained, purchase more manœuvring grounds instead of spoiling Aldershot and Salisbury Plain. He asked whether anything was being done to improve guard-room accommodation. At present the soldier had to sleep on a plank, and as it was important that men should be properly rested when doing their term of guard duty he thought something could be done in this matter. He understood that some experiments had been made in connection with guard-room arrangements. He was sure hon. Members would await with interest the result of the experiment.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON said the hon. Member for West Islington had challenged the increase on the Vote as a whole after making full allowance for the exceptional charges of last year, and he thought the right hon. Gentleman, before dealing with points of detail, should defend that increase in general terms. He thought the reasonableness of that demand could not be denied in the present state of our expenditure. He believed the country wished, indeed demanded, the most severe exercise of economy in all branches, but more particularly in the Army. He instanced the specific item on page 75 for the provision of temporary accommodation owing to the increased cost of the Army in South Africa. It was a large item, and covered about one-third of the increase. He thought the right hon. Gentleman would be strictly in order if he took up that item and dealt with it at once. There had been some conversation to-day about Military Works Acts. He did not think it would be right for him to attempt to discuss the policy of these measures, but he might be permitted to point out that the reasons for these Acts which were given by the noble Lord and by the right hon. Gentleman did not seem to agree. The Secretary of State apparently would put all permanent works on loans. The noble Lord, on the other hand, would put all big works on loans. Now these were not quite the same thing, and he did not know that the House would be prepared to accept either. The justification of a loan was that if in the state of finance of the country for the moment it was inconvenient to resort to new taxation, or if there were other financial reasons, then, and then only, they should resort to loans even for works of a permanent character. He would not press the demand which had been made from this side of the House that the Military Works Bill should be produced to-day. He did not think the Government could be asked now to say what they were going to propose in that Bill, but he thought they were almost bound to tell the Committee what was the estimated total expenditure under the existing Military Works Acts up to the end of the present financial year—31st March. That could now be estimated almost to a farthing. Further, the Government must be able to tell the Committee at this moment what was the probable estimate of expenditure under the Military Works Acts for the year beginning 1st April. He asked the right hon. Gentleman whether he could tell the Committee how much of this Vote depended upon his own scheme of Army Corps, and generally whether this was to be considered a normal Vote. He was using the right hon. Gentleman's own words. He had distinguished between normal and exceptional expenditure through this session, and therefore the Committee could reasonably ask information as to how much of the Vote was normal and how much exceptional.

Mr. BRODRICK said he did not think any of the observations made by the hon. Member for Dundee could be regarded as in any way unreasonable. He had asked for a variety of information, which, so far as he could, he would certainly give him. He thought there had been some confusion to-day, as had happened on some previous occasions. The view prevailed among a few members of the Committee that there was something hardly above-board in providing for larger new works by means of loans instead of Votes. He had made a defence on this subject before. He had not the smallest doubt that the system which was now pursued was the only proper, economical and efficient system. The system was carried on before this Government came into office. It was set on foot sixteen years ago. Up to that time the Votes for barracks—for large new works—were put on the Estimates for each year. Under that system the Department never knew when they were going to build large barracks whether they would be able to get the money to carry on the work in the following year. Everybody who owned property knew that when work had once been started the only economical way was to complete it at whatever pace the contractor worked. The system led to two most vicious practices. One was that as money taken in one year and not expended had to be surrendered to the Exchequer before March 31st, there was a temptation to spend that money at all costs in the course of the year for which it was voted. This wholly unbusiness like system was replaced by one under which they came to the House from time to time and submitted their programme. In the present year they asked the House for half-a-million to pay the interest and sinking fund of the expenditure on barracks which would be used for hundreds of years. He believed that there was no expenditure which the Committee would grudge less than that for housing the troops. Roughly speaking, new works of a permanent description were built out of loans—that was to say, works of any magnitude—but small works were not included. They also thought that the purchase of land was a legitimate expenditure to be placed on loan.

The hon. Gentleman had asked him how much of this Vote depended on the Army Corps scheme. Now, one advantage of that great scheme of organisation was that it practically cost no money. He dared say that hon. Members would be surprised at that statement. They utilised every existing barrack, and it was perfectly true that they were adapting some of those barracks to the requirements of a certain number of troops under the scheme. But it was also true that for the first time they were building barracks where they were wanted, instead of putting them here and there in a hap-hazard way where it might be convenient to buy land. *Qua* the Army Corps scheme, there was no expenditure incurred further than to provide barrack accommodation for 54,000 troops, the number which the House voted additional in 1897. The hon. Member asked whether this was normal expenditure. Barracks were the worst subject on which to talk of normal expenditure. It was in a sense normal expenditure, but the more barracks there were the more repairs would be required, and it was impossible to say what expenditure might be necessary from time to time on sanitary and other services. As regarded expenditure on loan: under the loans already running the estimated expenditure in this country for the year 1903-4 was £2,250,000, and for hutting troops in South Africa £1,250,000. As the Committee was aware, there had been large additions to the permanent garrison in South Africa. Up to 1896 the number was between 4,000 and 5,000, which was increased in 1898 to between 7,000 and 8,000—and the additional men were only temporarily accommodated in Ladysmith. Consequently sufficient hutting accommodation had to be provided for the permanent garrison, whatever the numbers might be in the future. He was sure that the Committee would feel that, having kept the men for three years under canvas, it was very desirable that they should be put under a good roof as soon as possible. Of course they were not providing for the whole number of 30,000 at present in South Africa—one-half of which might be regarded as temporarily located there.

His hon and gallant friend behind him had asked a question about the new hospital. It was extremely desirable that this hospital, which was to be the headquarters of the Royal Army Medical Corps Staff, should be in London to enable the doctors to attend lectures and take part in research work, which had been practically the main incentive to the large number of medical men who had lately joined the corps. His hon. friend urged that they should not over-build at centres like Salisbury Plain, so as to prevent the proper training of the troops; and he asked that isolated barracks in small towns, where the troops could not be properly exercised, should be abolished. But they could not have it both ways. He would, however, now give a pledge. The War Office had fully considered, in regard to Salisbury Plain, the necessity of keeping a very large area entirely clear, and he believed that exercises carried on there were well provided for. His hon. friend had asked a question about cubicles. That was a difficult question to answer. They had tried experiments with cubicles, and there was a difference of opinion as to whether they were desirable or not. They were more expensive than the old barrack system, because they took up more room, and they made it much more difficult to keep the barracks clean. His personal leaning was to have a certain number of cubicles and allow men of good conduct to occupy them. He was in correspondence with the Commander-in-Chief on the subject, which was important, and which the Committee would agree had much to do with the comfort of the soldier especially when they hoped to get a better class of men to enter the Army.

SIR ROBERT REID (Dumfries Burghs) said he understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that there was to be accommodation of a permanent character for the troops in South Africa. He saw that in the Estimates there was provision for temporary accommodation. Would the right hon. Gentleman tell the Committee whether these were to be permanent barracks, and what number of men it was contemplated they would accommodate?

MR. BRODRICK said that the matter was still the subject of correspondence. It was impossible, in the state of South Africa, to put up buildings to house 20,000 men in the time at their disposal; and what had taken place was that wooden huts of the best description—airy, superior, roomy huts, such as had lasted for thirty or forty years in this country—had been sent out to South Africa. At present the hutting going on in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony was estimated to accommodate 20,000 troops and the families of the men on the married establishment. What they had been careful to see was that the accessory buildings, which accounted for a large portion of the expense, were adapted for what would be the permanent garrison only.

MR. RENWICK (Newcastle-on-Tyne) asked if the right hon. Gentleman would give a Return of the existing rifle ranges, and those that were to be provided in the near future. He quite recognised that the Return should not specify the districts where the ranges were to be fixed, otherwise the Government would have to pay a much larger amount for the land required. He had been surprised that the hon. Member for Dundee had advocated economy on every item in the Estimates. There were some items on which economy could be exercised, but that for rifle ranges was not one of them; and he was sure that the constituencies would grudge no sum in reason for the provision of these ranges. Lord Roberts, in the course of a speech delivered in 1901, appealed to the patriotism of the British people to make no opposition to the acquisition of rifle ranges, and to promote by all means in their power rifle shooting, on which the efficiency of the Army absolutely depended. He agreed with the Commander-in-Chief, and hoped that the Secretary for War would give the Committee some assurance on this all-important matter of rifle ranges.

MR. BECKETT (Yorkshire, N.R., Whitby) said he gladly welcomed the remarks of his hon. friend, and he would suggest to the Secretary for War that it would greatly assist in providing rifle ranges if more power were given to the local authorities. He had heard of a case in which a County Council was quite willing to acquire such a range, but owing to some technical difficulty it was found impossible to do so. He was convinced that if the local authorities were approached they would assist the War Office in every possible way in providing rifle ranges in great numbers, and at small cost. The right hon. Gentleman said that unless the troops had training grounds they would have to walk about with their hands in their pockets; and they all heard with satisfaction that more land was to be taken. That might not seem to accord with views on economy, but at the same time it would make for economy and efficiency in the long run, because efficiency could not be attained unless the men were properly trained. He also agreed with his right hon. friend in his statement with regard to raising money by Military Works Bills for providing barracks and other things of that kind. The Dawkins Committee investigated that subject, and came to the conclusion that it was a proper and economic method, and that the system of providing money by Vote was found to be a more wasteful and less businesslike arrangement altogether. He was informed that fortifications had been erected on the Surrey Hills; and he wished to know whether they were intended for the protection of London, or for the protection of the division of which his right hon. friend was such a distinguished representative. His right hon. friend said that provision had to be made for an increased force in South Africa, but he did not understand whether that was to be an increase in the present or would be an increase in the future. He hoped it would be an increase in the future, as he was very much in favour of an Army Corps being permanently established in South Africa. He wished to ask a question about the £3,500 to be voted for the Commandant's house in Pekin. He thought that the troops were to be withdrawn from China; but, perhaps, the troops referred to were legation guards. [Lord STANLEY: "Yes Sir."] That was what he thought. As regarded expenditure he thought that a distinction ought to be drawn more carefully between what was permanent and what was temporary, and what should be charged to capital and what should be put on the Votes. Unfortunate results often happened when expenditure was charged to capital which should have been paid out of revenue.

SIR WILLIAM ALLAN (Gateshead) said that a sum of £10,000 appeared under the heading of "Expenses in connection with Experiments." He should like to know what these experiments were. He should also like to know about the £5,000 put down for Brennan torpedoes. Were the War Office making them? If so, where, and how many torpedo stations were there; He quite agreed with the right hon. Gentleman when he said that the quickest way of finishing a job once it was begun was to go right through with it. If he wished to increase the cost, the best way to do that was to leave off, and then begin again.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth) said he wished to supplement what had fallen from his hon. friend with reference to the co-operation of local authorities in the matter of providing ranges. The attitude of the War Office on this question was not one which was calculated to promote the wishes of the House of Commons, or the general views of the country. There was a very suitable camping ground at Great Yarmouth. The Corporation some years ago made it still more suitable; and as the result a large number of Volunteer brigades used it. On the recommendation of the military authorities the Corporation spent money in improving it. Then arose the question of ranges, and it was pointed out how very desirable it would be if a range was also provided. The Corporation at considerable expense provided a range with the sanction and under the supervision of the military authorities; and thus saddled themselves with an addition to the rates for the advantage of the public service, and also, of course, indirectly, for the advantage of the town. Since the new Army Scheme came into operation, the position was entirely changed, and a veto had been practically put on Volunteer brigades who wished to go to Yarmouth because there was not a larger manœuvring ground. The Mayor of Yarmouth, who was himself a distinguished officer of Volunteers, and who served in South Africa and was a man of practical experience, brought the Corporation to the point of trying to meet the difficulties which had been raised by the War Office, and the result was that the Corporation showed willingness to provide a larger manœuvring ground if the War Office would undertake to use the ground annually and restore the old condition of things. The War Office were good enough to signify to the Corporation that if they spent the money, amounting perhaps to many thousands of pounds, they would not raise any objection to Volunteers going there if not sent elsewhere. Was that the attitude which the War Office should adopt if they really wished to encourage the co-operation of the local authorities? He mentioned the case in support of what had been said by his hon. friend; and he would ask his right hon. friend whether, in cases where there was an indication of such willingness of the local authorities to co-operate with the War Office, a practical Committee should not be appointed to come to a businesslike settlement. In the particular case of Yarmouth, the War Office were losing a chance they would never get again. He maintained that it was not necessary that Volunteers should go every year to the big camps. There should also be subsidiary camps; and when local authorities offered to provide ground for camps, ranges, and manœuvring grounds for exercising brigades, the War Office ought to give a better answer than to say: "Oh! if you spend the money, we will then see whether we will take advantage of it or not."

A very considerable portion of the Vote was devoted to the military arrangements for water defence, such as submarine mines and other things. That involved a special school at Chatham to train officers and soldiers to become aquatic professors. The cost of the military arrangements for local water defence was extremely large; and he would ask an assurance from his right hon. friend that he would go into the matter and bring it to the notice of the Defence Committee. These were charges which ought not to belong to the Army Estimates at all; and their work could best be discharged by retired officers and pensioned men of the Navy. It was very fitting work for them; but not fitting work for anyone else. The Admiralty paid large retiring allowances to officers and men who had qualified in torpedo duties; and they would undertake the water defence, which now cost so much, for a very slight increase of pension. With regard to fixed fortifications, they could not be justified when it was admitted that the first principle of the country was to obtain security on the sea. He protested against the ever increasing vote for land fortifications. The only other question he wished to ask was with regard to the appropriation in aid for Esquimalt, £500; he saw no expenditure put down for works at Esquimalt, but he supposed the money had already been expended. He would like to know whether the War Office expenditure there had come to an end and what its total amount had been, and how long we were to receive from the Canadian Government this £500 a year. He was interested in this matter because before the War Office took it over Esquimalt was under the Admiralty, and was garrisoned by marine artillery at little cost, but immediately the War Office took it over there followed a great expenditure. For that reason he wanted to know, since the War Office had taken it over, how much they had spent upon it.

*MR. TOMKINSON (Cheshire, Crewe) said he rose to support the appeal that had been made with regard to the future provision of rifle ranges, and especially so far as the Yeomanry was concerned. Under the old system every Yeomanry squadron, and in some cases each troop, had provided for them a private range up to 600 yards at which very efficient firing was taught. That system had now been done away with, and at the present moment the regiment with which he was connected, the Earl of Chester's Yeomanry, had no range at all. They had a fine new permanent camp on Government ground for military exercises, but as regarded a rifle range, they had to go a distance of thirty miles by train to a place called Altcar, in the neighbourhood of Liverpool, at considerable expense. If they were allowed to find their own ranges, and if the War Office would be content with a range up to 600 yards, he ventured to say that the County Councils would provide an excellent one close to the camp, affording communication by rail or otherwise. But if it was thought necessary to have a range up to a mile, with two miles beyond and a mile on each side as a zone of safety, in a populous country like this, they would have to wait until the Greek Kalends before they found it.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport) asked whether in respect to rifle ranges any experiments had been made with miniature targets and short ranges, so as to save taking troops long distances. He could not help thinking that with a proper system of miniature targets they could accustom the men to the use of the sights and the triggers and so on. He thought with a development of the miniature target system something might be done to teach the men the use of their weapons. He noticed with pleasure that suggestions had been made from all sides of the House, which, if his right hon. friend would accept, would increase the Estimates by £9,000,000 or £10,000,000. He was glad to see there were so many converts to the policy of the Government.

MAJOR SEELY (Isle of Wight) said the hon. and learned Member who had just sat down had raised the question to which he also had desired to draw attention. He would suggest that a Departmental Committee should be appointed before any large expenditure on rifle ranges was entered into to investigate the matter. So far as he had been able to ascertain the results of miniature target practice, persons who had practised at these miniature targets had made most excellent shooting when taken to ranges of 500 yards; in fact, far better shooting than the Regular shooters at the range on that day. So extraordinary was the result, that he felt justified in communicating with the Commander-in-Chief on the subject. He thought if something were done in this direction, they would get better shooting at less cost. The same remark would also apply to smokeless powder and fortifications, because both matters depended upon appreciating the novel circumstances introduced by modern inventions. A Departmental Committee, therefore, should also be instituted to investigate and say how far the invention of smokeless powder had done away with any necessity for fortifications. He thought if that were done, results might possibly be obtained which would modify works which, to his knowledge, were now being proceeded with.

MR. BRODRICK said the War Office had concentrated a great deal of attention upon rifle ranges, and they were pressed on all sides of the House for an almost unlimited extension of them, which could not be carried out without large expenditure. Nothing was easier than to talk of rifle ranges all over England for all the troops; but since the Government came into office eight years ago they had spent, he was going to say, an enormous sum in providing rifle ranges and training grounds which had rifle ranges on them or attached to them. It was impossible that that sort of expenditure could go on. He did not think it would be possible for them to find ranges for some 800,000 men. If the trials now going on with miniature ranges proved effective, the problem of properly training the troops would be considerably modified. The subject had engaged the attention of the War Office, and experiment would no doubt give them further information. The difficulty about fortifications was that the problem of what fortifications should be was constantly changing. The fortifications which were being completed at Malta were exactly of the type which had been pressed upon him—namely, what were called invisible fortifications, and were totally different from those adopted even ten or fifteen years ago. Naturally that system would be followed in other places. He had no doubt that in some cases, when it was a question of completing a fortification already begun, not quite of the newest type, or of beginning again at an enormous expense, the War Office had adopted the former alternative. With regard to the local complaint raised by his hon. friend the Member for Great Yarmouth, the War Office would only be too glad to avail themselves of the assistance of the County or Borough Councils when they were willing to give it. Their difficulty was that, though they pressed the House to give County Councils power to assist in national defence, they had been unable to find the necessary time for the Bill owing to the strong opposition of persons supposed to represent municipal bodies. If the local authorities had the power to lease or buy land and to let land or ranges to the troops and Volunteers, he believed the public would be the gainers. But, whenever the Government went into the market to buy land, every effort was made by everybody to get the largest price they could. It did not matter who they were, they all, with one or two notable exceptions, did their utmost to get a price which the Government considered exorbitant, and in almost every case the arbitrators were on the same side. There was a striking instance of this on Salisbury Plain. A gentleman purchased certain land there for £1,100 when he knew the War Office wanted to purchase. He had not actually completed the purchase or paid the money over, and yet the arbitrator, one of the first judges in the land, gave him £1,650 for that which, he believed, he had not even passed his cheque for £1,100.

Then he would say a word with regard to fortifications for the defence of London. That question was raised three or four years ago, and he then explained that there was nothing of the kind in the sense in which the point was put to him. It was perfectly true that the military authorities desired to have, at certain strategical positions, centres of earthworks on which to place covered storehouses, in which guns would be put at the right time. These works were of a very modest character as regarded expenditure; but there was no question of fortifying London in the sense suggested. It would be contrary to all modern ideas of military teaching.

His hon. and gallant friend the Member for Yarmouth had said, quite truly, that these Estimates contained an immense sum for services rendered by the Army to the Navy. It was well worth considering, he thought, whether they should not work out and lay before Parliament what was the cost charged on the Army Votes for services which would not be involved if it were not for the necessity of keeping coaling stations for the Navy, and which was, no doubt, from one point of view, purely naval expenditure. If he might be allowed, he would deprecate too great an attempt to adjust a sort of balance between the Navy and the Army in this matter. This new system, of which they had heard now almost for the first time, of assuming that whatever was given to the Army was so much taken from the Navy, was entirely foreign to the conceptions which those who had to deal with the two services had in their minds. It had been constantly urged in the course of the last few weeks, against him in particular, that in framing the Army scheme he had entirely ignored the requirements and probable action of the Navy. Nothing was more foreign to the procedure he had adopted or to the ideas he had in his mind. And in that respect a quotation was made from a speech of his only a few days ago, which was entirely taken out of the context. He fully recognised that in the defence of this country they must take the Army and the Navy together; and it was immaterial, he thought, to the country at large whether the expenditure was found on the Army or the Navy Votes; but as there was so much misapprehension on the point it was worth considering whether the Estimates should not be placed before Parliament in such a form that the cost of the maintenance of the Army proper was separated from the expenditure due to the maintenance of coaling stations and so forth for the Navy.

Mr. COURTENAY WARNER said the reply of the Secretary of State had not touched the point referred to by the hon. Member for Great Yarmouth, viz., that soldiers were doing sailors' work in connection with torpedoes and submarine mines. That went a step farther than the protection of coaling stations. In regard to rifle ranges, he was satisfied that the return promised by the Financial Secretary was the only one that could be given, but he was not satisfied that much progress had been made. The matter was of so great importance that it would be better to do away with two or three battalions of the regular Army or twenty or thirty battalions of the Reserves in order that the remainder might be taught to shoot. The value of the items of this Vote could not be properly estimated until they knew what was to be done under the Military Works Bill. The mere word of the Minister that too much was not being spent was hardly sufficient: in going through the Estimates something more was required. Another objection which had not been answered was, as to the lack of information: the items were not separated, and there was not even given information corresponding to that given last year. He should, therefore, vote for the reduction.

Mr. LOUGH said that while the right hon. Gentleman had clearly explained several points of detail, he had not dealt satisfactorily with the main objection which had been urged, viz., that a proper line had not been drawn between capital expenditure provided under the Loans Bill, and the sums properly chargeable on revenue. The right hon. Gentleman attempted to make the division clear by saying that new works of large amount were dealt with by borrowing. He did not object to the principle of borrowing for such works, but if they were provided for in that way it was to be expected that the Estimates would diminish. Instead of that, the Estimates had increased. But even the distinction laid down by the right hon. Gentleman was not observed, because in the Estimates there were items of £83,000 for a new hospital at Portsmouth, £17,000 for new workshops and armouries, and £41,000 for the purchase of land.

Lord STANLEY pointed out that the new hospital at Portsmouth was in place of one taken over by the Admiralty, and for which the Admiralty would repay the War Office.

Mr. LOUGH said that that made no difference to his argument that, according to the right hon. Gentleman's own rule, items of capital expenditure were placed on the Estimates, and he believed items which should be met out of revenue were included in the Loans Bill. Another point had been entirely left untouched, and it was that this year this great Estimate should not have been increased. It had, however, been increased by £161,000, and the House would have to take steps to stop this extraordinary increase in the Army Estimates. Therefore he should ask the Committee to divide.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 83; Noes, 236. (Division List, No. 40.)

AYES.

Allan, Sir William (*Gateshead*)
Beaumont, Wentworth C. B.
Bell, Richard
Black, Alexander William
Brand, Hon. Arthur G.
Brigg, John
Broadhurst, Henry
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, John
Burt, Thomas
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Robert
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Causton, Richard Knight
Cawley, Frederick
Channing, Francis Allston
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*)
Crombie, John William
Crooks, William
Davies, Alfred (*Carmarthen*)
Dewar, John A. (*Inverness-sh.*)
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dunn, Sir William
Edwards, Frank
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Fenwick, Charles
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Hardie, J. Keir (*Merthyr Tyd*
Harwood, George
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-

Hayter, Rt Hon Sir Arthur D.
Helme, Norval Watson
Hope, John Deans (*Fife, West*
Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
Joicey, Sir James
Jones, David B. (*Swansea*).
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kitson, Sir James
Labouchere, Henry
Lambert, George
Leese, Sir Jos. F. (*Accrington*)
Leng, Sir John
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
M'Crae, George
M'Govern, T.
M'Killop, W. (*Sligo, North*)
M'Laren, Sir Charles Benj.
Markham, Arthur Basil
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, K. (*Tipperary, Mid*)
O'Dowd, John
O'Shee, James John
Partington, Oswald
Pease, J. A. (*Saffron Walden*)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Rea, Russell
Reid, Sir R. T. (*Dumfries*)
Robertson, Edmund (*Dundee*)
Runciman, Walter
Samuel, Herbt. L. (*Cleveland*)
Schwann, Charles E.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles E. (*Stafford*)
Shaw, Thomas (*Hawick, B.*)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Soares, Ernest J.
Strachey, Sir Edward
Thomas, Sir A. (*Glam., E.*)
Thomas, David A. (*Merthyr*)
Tomkinson, James
Wallace, Robert
Walton, Joseph (*Barnsley*)
Warner, Thos. Courtenay T.
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Whiteley, G. (*York, W. R.*)
Woodhouse, Sir J T (*Huddersf'd*

Tellers for the Ayes—
Mr. Lough and Mr. J. H. Whitley.

NOES.

Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Allhusen, Aug. Henry Eden
Allsopp, Hon. George
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Right Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Bailey, James (*Walworth*)
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Baird, John George Alexander
Baldwin, Alfred
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Man'r*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Bignold, Arthur
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Boulnois, Edmund
Bousfield, William Robert
Bowles, T. G. (*Lynn Regis*)
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Bull, William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Campbell, Rt Hn J A (*Glasg.*)
Campbell, J. H. M. (*Dublin Univ*
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Cavendish, R. F. (*N. Lancs.*)
Cavendish, V C W (*Derbysh.*)
Cayzer, Sir Charles William
Cecil, Evelyn (*Aston Manor*)
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Chamberlain, Rt Hon J (*Birm*
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Chapman, Edward
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Collings, Right Hon. Jesse
Colston, Chas. Edw H. Athole
Corbett, A. Cameron (*Glasg.*)
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Cox, Irwin Edwd. Bainbridge
Craig, Charles Curtis (*Antrim S.*
Cripps, Charles Alfred
Cross, H. Shepherd (*Bolton*)
Crossley, Sir Savile
Cubitt, Hon. Henry
Davies, M. Vaughan, (*Cardig'n*
Denny, Colonel
Dewar, Sir T. R. (*Tr. Haml'ts*
Dickinson, Robert Edmond
Dickson, Charles Scott
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dimsdale, Rt. Hon. Sir Jos. C.
Disraeli, Coningsby Ralph
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir Wm. Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Hart
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Faber, E. B. (*Hants, W.*)
Faber, George Denison (*York*)
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Firbank, Sir Joseph Thomas
Fisher, William Hayes
FitzGerald, Sir Robt. Penrose
Fitzroy, Hon. Edw. Algernon
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S.W.*
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, Hn A. G. H (*City of Lond*
Gibbs, Hn. Vicary (*St. Albans*
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (*Elgin & Nrn*
Gore, Hn. S. F. Ormsby- (*Linc*
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Eldon
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Graham, Henry Robert
Greene, W. Raymond (*Cambs*
Groves, James Grimble
Hall, Edward Marshall
Halsey, Rt. Hon. Thomas F.
Hamilton, Rt Hn Ld. G. (*Midx*
Hamilton, Marq. of (*Londondy*
Hanbury, Rt. Hn. Robt. Wm.
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Healy, Timothy Michael
Heath, James (*Stafford, N. W.*
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Hoult, Joseph
Houston, Robert Paterson
Howard, Jno (*Kent, Faver'hm*
Howard, J. (*Midd., Tott'ham*
Hozier, Hon. Jas. Henry Cecil
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Jebb, Sir Richard Claver'ouse
Jessel, Capt. Herbert Merton
Kemp, Lieut.-Colonel George
Kennedy, Patrick James
Kenyon, Hon. G. T. (*Denbigh*
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*
Kimber, Henry
King, Sir Henry Seymour
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*
Lawrence, Sir Jos. (*Monm'th*)
Lawson, John Grant
Lee, A. H. (*Hants, Fareham*)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Fredk. N. S.
Lockie, John
Long, Col. Chas. W. (*Evesham*
Long, Rt. Hn. W. (*Bristol, S.*
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Francis William
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*
Lucas, Reg'ld J. (*Portsmouth*)
Macdona, John Cumming
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
M'Killop, Jas. (*Stirlingshire*)
Malcolm, Ian
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Maxwell, Rt Hn Sir H. E (*Wigt'n*
Maxwell, W J H (*Dumfriesshire*)
Melville, Beresford Valentine
Milvain, Thomas
Mitchell, Edw. (*Fermanagh, N.*)
Mitchell, William (*Burnley*)
Molesworth, Sir Lewis
More, Robt. Jasper (*Shropshire*
Morgan, D. J. (*Walthamstow*)
Morrell, George Herbert
Morrison, James Archibald
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mount, William Arthur
Mowbray, Sir Robt. Gray C.
Muntz, Sir Philip A.
Murray, Rt Hn A. Graham (*Bute*
Newdegate, Francis A. N.
Nicholson, William Graham
Nicol, Donald Ninian
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay

Palmer, Walter (*Salisbury*)
Parkes, Ebenezer
Pease, H. Pike (*Darlington*)
Peel, Hn. Wm. R. Wellesley
Percy, Earl
Pilkington, Lt.-Col. Richard
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Purvis, Robert
Pym, C. Guy
Randles, John S.
Rankin, Sir James
Reid, James (*Greenock*)
Remnant, Jas. Farquharson
Renshaw, Sir Charles Bine
Renwick, George
Richards, Henry Charles
Ridley, Hon. M. W. (*Stalybridge*
Ridley, S. Forde (*Bethnal Green*
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Russell, T. W.
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford-
Sadler, Col. Saml. Alexander
Samuel, Harry S. (*Limehouse*)
Sandys, Lt.-Col. Thos. Myles
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Saunderson, Rt. Hn. Col. E. J.
Scott, Sir S. (*Marylebone, W.*)
Seely, Chas. Hilton (*Lincoln*)
Seely, Maj. J. E. B. (*Isle of Wight*
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (*Renfrew*)
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Sinclair, Louis (*Romford*)
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, H. C. (*North’mb Tyneside*
Smith, Jas. Parker (*Lanarks.*)
Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (*Strand*)
Spear, John Ward
Spencer, Sir E. (*W. Bromwich*)
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stewart, Sir M. J. M‘Taggart
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Talbot, Rt Hn. J. G. (*Oxf’d Univ.*
Taylor, Austin (*East Toxteth*)
Thompson, Dr E C (*Monagh’n, N*
Thornton, Percy M.
Tollemache, Henry James
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. E. M.
Tritton, Charles Ernest
Tufnell, Lieut.-Col. Edward
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Vincent, Sir Edgar (*Exeter*)
Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir W. H.
Welby, Lt.-Col. A C E (*Taunton*
Wharton, Rt. Hon. J. Lloyd
Whiteley, H. (*Ashton-und-Lyne*
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Williams, Rt Hn J Powell-(*Birm*
Williams, Colonel R. (*Dorset*)
Willox, Sir John Archibald
Wilson, A. S. (*York, E. R.*)
Wilson, John (*Falkirk*)
Wilson, John (*Glasgow*)
Wilson-Todd, W. H. (*Yorks.*)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (*Bath*)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wood, James
Wortley, Rt. Hon C. B. Stuart
Wrightson, Sir Thomas
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, William

Tellers for the Noes—
Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Fellowes.

Original Question again proposed.

* Sir A. HAYTER called attention to the increase on the Estimates consequent on the addition of forty-three to the "staff for engineer services," and asked the Secretary of State for War to state the reason for the increase. He would be very much obliged also if the right hon. Gentleman would give some information in regard to an item of £36,800 for the conversion of North George Magazine at Gibraltar into a frozen meat store. In all £47,000 was to be spent on the conversion of this store. He did not understand how the work already built for £42,000 should involve so large an expenditure.

Mr. BRODRICK said he was afraid that the right hon. Gentleman was over sanguine about the conversion of an ammunition magazine into a frozen meat store being in any way a cheap matter. In such a case they were only able to use the outer walls, and beyond that almost everything had to be rebuilt. He had personally investigated a large frozen meat store the other day and was surprised at the amount of work that had to be done. He had not seen the exact items; but he was afraid the amount very much surprised him.

Sir A. HAYTER: It is larger than the original cost.

Mr. BRODRICK agreed, the original cost being £42,000 and that of the conversion, £46,000 or £47,000. With regard to the increase in the staff in the Surveyors Department, that was due to the amount of repairs and work that had to be done. There had been, however, a decrease of special salaries of over £3,000. There was no doubt that a large amount of work had to be done and supervised in that Department.

Mr. WHITLEY said there was an item of £9,700, which was described as required for additional staff and new stations in South Africa. In another part of the Estimates there was an item of £50,000 for temporary accommodation in South Africa for the increased force there. He noticed there were other items in the Votes in connection with the maintenance of a force in South Africa. As far as he was aware the Committee had never had from the Secretary of State for War a statement, firstly, of the number of troops to be kept in South Africa during the next twelve months; secondly, of the nature of the provision which was to be made for the cost of such things as barracks or temporary accommodation; and, thirdly, the division, if any, of those charges between the Imperial and the local exchequers. He thought it was very desirable that, instead of going over the ground as each item arose, the Committee should have a clear and comprehensive statement from the War Office of what would be the estimated expenditure for the next twelve months on the force kept in South Africa. It would naturally be divided into normal expenditure—that was, the expenditure which would be incurred if the soldiers were at home instead of in South Africa—and the increased charge due to more or less permanent works such as barracks.

MR. BRODRICK: That is shown on page 6 of the Estimates.

MR. WHITLEY said he was not aware that there was a complete statement of that kind. Did it include the items of £50,000 and £9,700 to which he had referred?

LORD STANLEY: Yes, Sir.

MR. WHITLEY asked whether the whole cost of the troops to be maintained in South Africa for the next twelve months would fall upon Imperial funds, or whether there was to be a contribution by the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal, or by the self-governing colonies of Natal and Cape Colony.

MR. BRODRICK said the excess of expenditure—the extra expenditure for temporary purposes—on these Estimates with respect to South Africa amounted to £2,000,000. With regard to the possibility of a contribution—and that possibility had not been lost sight of—no actual arrangement had been arrived at. He was certain that one colony, at any rate, would be willing to contribute.

MR. WHITLEY asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would state the nature of the barracks to be provided under the Vote for £50,000. Was it for permanent buildings?

LORD STANLEY said there were a certain number of troops to be kept there for a time, over and above what would afterwards be required. They could not be kept any longer in camps, and therefore the Government were providing as cheaply as they possibly could coverings for their heads. These were temporary huts, without any of the ordinary accessories of barracks. They were to be put up just to accommodate the men until the accommodation was no longer required.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £4,820,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the charge for the supply and repair of warlike and other stores, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said he should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman a question or two about the new rifle for the troops. He had seen one in the Tea Room and thought of bringing it into the House, but was afraid that hon. Members would take some objection to that course. He personally did not understand rifles, but he was informed by those who did, that this one had some very serious defects, the principal one being a very considerable increase in the recoil over that of the last type. Every one who used a rifle knew that when they began to teach recruits to shoot the recoil was a very serious consideration. He was further told that the new rifle being covered with wood except at the slot for the back sight, the hot air came out through the slot and obscured the sight. Then, again, was there any advantage in the shortening of the rifle, and was there any alteration in the twist of the rifling, or was it the same rifling as in the former weapon.

*__SIR CHARLES DILKE__ (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) asked, with reference to the new rifle, whether it was the case that the muzzle velocity was less than in the previous rifle, and was the trajectory higher. Of course an immense advantage claimed for the late rifle was the flatness of the trajectory. That was a very serious change indeed if it had been made.

*__MR. POWELL-WILLIAMS__ (Birmingham, S.) asked through what course of experiment the new rifle had been put. Everybody knew it was not only an extremely expensive, but a most important matter, to make any change in a service rifle. Before the last rifle was accepted for Army service, it was put through experiments under all conditions, in dry and wet climates, to see whether it was a really serviceable weapon. It was what he thought was known as a Committee rifle: it was the result of a conference. He should like to know whether this rifle had come from a similar source. There were defects in the old rifle that was now to be superseded, which experts in guns deliberately attributed to the fact that it was not a rifle designed throughout by one individual. After experiments it was found that the shooting of that rifle was not satisfactory, that its weakness was due to the fact that the bolt which took the recoil after the explosion was too long, and not firm in its bed. He had examined the new rifle and found the bolt was longer than in the old one, and thus the question arose whether this defect, which was proved to have existed in the old rifle, was repeated in the new one. At any rate he considered that before the new rifle was placed in the hands of the troops there should be exhaustive experiments, and he should be glad if the Financial Secretary could assure the Committee that that had been done.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE asked the Secretary for War to give some explanation as to an item under I "Engineers Stores, £40,000." So far as he understood, that item appeared in the Estimates for the first time, and as it was nearly a fourth of the total of this particular Vote some explanation of it ought to be given.

Sir WILLIAM ALLAN said he had examined very carefully the new rifle lying for the past few days in the Tea Room, and he could tell the Secretary of State for War that the bolt was not a fit at all. It was too slack. Then the lift of the magazine was not uniform, and consequently the cartridge got jammed. It did not lift square, and the magazine did not work fairly. The sight was far too tender, and there ought to be some protection for it. It was of a very slim construction, though clever enough for shifting the gradations, but it was too slight for hard work. The rifle was also far too heavy and of faulty mechanism. No soldier could use it for active work in the field without coming to grief.

Lord STANLEY said he did not pretend in any way to be an expert in rifles, and he could only say that this new rifle had been tested in every possible way. His right hon. friend had condemned it as a "Committee rifle," and would have wished that it had been the production of a single individual. He did not agree with his right hon. friend. He thought a Committee did the work better than by leaving it to a single man. They issued a thousand of these rifles last June, and these had been tried in every possible way, and all of them had been uniformly well reported on. His hon. friend behind him said that there was a certain amount more "kick." That was true, but the increase in the recoil was very slight, and that disadvantage was more than counterbalanced by its numerous advantages. It was a pound lighter and five inches shorter than the old rifle. His right hon. friend opposite had asked whether the result of that was not a decrease in the muzzle velocity. He was afraid he could not answer exactly that technical point, but he understood that the new rifle had a muzzle velocity of thirty feet more than the old rifle. He was under the impression that the magazine was exactly the same as the old one, which had answered admirably in South Africa. The rifle had been examined most carefully, and tried in every possible way, and it had been reported upon by every expert in rifle shooting in the Army. He hoped the Committee would admit that the War Office had done all that was possible to put a good weapon into the hands of the troops.

General LAURIE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest) asked whether the trajectory of the new rifle was higher or lower than that of the old rifle. That was most important.

Lord STANLEY said he did not know exactly, but he thought they might take it that as the muzzle velocity was increased there would be an almost imperceptible difference in the trajectory.

*Colonel LUCAS (Suffolk, Lowestoft) asked whether the rifle would not be issued in three sizes of stock.

MAJOR SEELY said he did not think that shooting experts were good judges of recoil, for they held their rifles so tight to the shoulder that they were not affected by the recoil. The ordinary soldier, who held his rifle loosely to the shoulder, would feel the recoil more.

MR. POWELL-WILLIAMS asked at what rate it was proposed to put the new rifle in the hands of the troops.

LORD STANLEY said he could not answer that question. They were getting stocks of different sizes.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said that the noble Lord had forgotten to answer the rather serious point he had raised. He referred to the question of the back-sight, and the exudation of foul air when the rifle was fired, which obscured the sight.

LORD STANLEY said that the whole of these points had been tested by people who, with all respect, knew more about a rifle than hon. Members. The War Office were informed that they had got a great improvement on the old rifle and they would now be able to arm both cavalry and infantry with a uniform rifle; and there would consequently not be the former great difference between the cavalry carbine and the infantry rifle as was the case in the last war. His hon. friend opposite had asked a question about Engineers' Stores. It was simply a transfer of special submarine stores from one Department to another. Formerly these were under the Inspector-General of Ordnance; now they were transferred to the man really responsible for them—the Inspector-General of Fortifications.

*MR. CROOKS (Woolwich) said he apologised to the Committee for intruding upon it so soon after his return to Parliament, but he feared that if he lost this opportunity he would be shut out for another year; and if he transgressed some of the Rules of the House he hoped he would be forgiven. He wanted to ask the Secretary for War one or two questions. There appeared in *The Times* on 7th March a letter alleged to have come from the War Office promising the contractors a fair share, or as it seemed to him, very much more than a fair share of Government work. He had been told privately that there existed an understanding in the House, that when work was to be given out, that work was to be allocated two-thirds to the contractors, and one-third to His Majesty's Departments. He did not know how it appeared to other hon. Members, but it seemed to him that any Department of a Government, which claimed to be a business Government, should have an undoubted right to first make use of all the resources which the Nation had placed at its disposal before considering any other persons whatever. Of course he had been told that the contractors came to the service of the Government in their hour of need, and therefore they had a right to be remembered when there was no great pressure. That was to say that these contractors had laid down plant and other things and that the Government were bound to keep them going. But he had yet to learn that any particular advantages, financial or otherwise, had accrued to the country. If the contractors had served the Government well, they had been exceedingly well paid for the work they did. They charged exceedingly high war prices for the materials they supplied. He was entitled to say to the Committee that he did not agree with the kind of patriotism which was measured up at so much per cent.: that a man would be patriotic or not according to the amount of dividends he paid to his shareholders. The nation was not entitled to consider these people except on strict business lines. They should receive no advantage or privilege beyond what they were entitled to. Of course he knew that they took orders for three years and that those three years had expired. His position was this: that this letter emanating from the War Office ought first to have taken into consideration the number of men and the class of men which the Government had at their disposal to produce the articles they wanted.

One hundred and fifty years ago the Government had established arsenals and manufactories where warlike material could be turned out; and for the last ten or twenty years much money had been spent by the nation in putting down plant for the use of the nation.

How could the Secretary of State for War square his notions of strict business principles with his practice, when he threw out of work a number of machines—not to speak of the number of men thrown out—with the view of finding employment for the machines and men of the contractors? If they wanted to get profit out of machinery it should be kept running. Idle machines depreciated sooner than working machines; and, therefore, he was entitled to ask why Government machines were kept idle. Was it of any particular value to the nation? He thought not, because, instead of getting goods cheaper, they were paying high prices for them while their own machines were standing idle. He had always heard that the Government were exceedingly anxious that their men should have regular employment; but when men were attracted to the service of the Government by the prospect of fairly regular employment, the conditions of regular employment were immediately thrown over in the interests of contractors. Why should the contractors be considered in times like these? In answer to a question he put to the right hon. Gentleman that afternoon, he was informed that there had been a general shrinkage. In the shell foundry 600 men were employed before the war, whereas now there were only 200 men in that department. Surely it ought to be put on the same footing as before the war. There was nothing unreasonable in that. In another department which was not up to its full strength, men had been working regularly for five years, but now it was to be reduced to a point lower than it ever had been during that period.

It might be said that contractors supplied material much cheaper than it could be made in the Government factories. If that were the contention, he would put a plain question to the right hon. Gentleman. Whose fault was it? Was it because of the extra supervision which was exercised in Government factories? He wished to know if the same conditions applied to workmen working for contractors and workmen in Government factories; and whether the supervision was the same in both cases. The men in the Government factories had to get up to a very high standard of work, otherwise they had to alter mistakes at their own expense. He wished to know whether the supervision was as strict in the case of workmen employed by contractors as in the case of workmen employed by the Government; and also whether the cost of supervision was charged to each department instead of being charged as a separate item. Surely the cost of supervision ought to be a separate charge. When it was charged to the Arsenal it placed the men in a false position, and made the work appear to be three times more expensive than similar work carried out by a contractor. The contractors had fairly good representation in this House, and many things were to be said in their favour; but he took the line that if there was a national workshop it was the duty of the Government to keep it employed before considering any outsiders. The question of emergency did not arise. Was it not true that Kynochs were making cases for 4·7 shells which were refused by the naval authorities, whereas the shells made in the Arsenal were always accepted. There could not be any excuse for discharging the men; and if the House were composed of business men they should approach this question in a businesslike way. The Government had no earthly right to be using the money of the nation in building machinery and then allowing it to stand idle in the interests of any private firm, no matter who they were, or what influence they might have. He begged to move the reduction of the Vote by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item C be reduced by £100."—(*Mr. Crooks.*)

MR. BRODRICK said he was sure that whatever their opinion might be as to the views of the hon. Member, all sections of the House would welcome his appearance in debate on a subject on which he was so fully informed. The question raised by the hon. Member was, however, by no means novel. It was one with which the House was exceedingly familiar. There was hardly a subject on which such a great change in the opinion of the House had taken place as that of the division of Government work between the ordnance factories and the private contractors. When he first represented the War Office in 1886, nothing evoked louder cheers in the House than to say that work had been diminished in the Government factories in order to give it to the private contractors. The hon. Gentleman now contended that the factories should be employed to their full time and capacity, and only the surplusage given to the contractors. The hon. Member appealed to the Committee as business men; and perhaps on this subject he might be permitted to quote the opinion of one of the shrewdest business men who had ever been at the head of the War Office. The late Mr. W. H. Smith laid it down that it was the business of the Government to keep private trade alive in time of peace, in order that it might be capable of expansion in the emergency of war; and that to secure that object they could afford to keep a certain amount of plant idle, knowing that they would have to depend on rapid power of expansion in time of war. He had always acted on that doctrine, and it appeared to him beyond question that they should reduce work at Woolwich to such a point as would enable them to secure a rapid increase in supply at the outbreak of war. What were the figures with regard to Woolwich? The present Government had by no means starved Woolwich. In 1895, when the present Government had come into office, 15,380 men were employed in the Woolwich workshops. The number had been increased in 1898 to 18,800, and during the war it had risen to 23,300. Surely it would be false economy to continue to keep the Woolwich factory up to the war level of employment when a large output was no longer needed. There had been a general restriction of output. Private traders were also complaining that the orders given them for next year were not so large as those of last year. The hon. Gentleman should forgive him for saying that the course taken by the Government with respect to their factories was not in the interest of any private firms. It was taken solely in the national interest. It was taken as a necessary concomitant of any sound policy for the provisions of supplies; and, while he desired to keep Woolwich as fully employed as possible, he maintained that there ought to be some machines idle in time of peace in order to have a proper expansion in time of war. He thought the Committee would agree that the hon. Member, after his recent experience, was justified in bringing the case of the men he represented before the Committee; but he was quite certain that the Committee would support the Government in the action they had taken.

*COLONEL BOWLES (Middlesex, Enfield) said he wished to direct attention to the necessity of keeping a machine-gun department at Enfield. As the Secretary of State for War had just said, if they were to have rapid power of expansion in time of war, it was necessary that they should be able to manufacture in their own arsenals, as well as obtain supplies from private firms, as private firms could not afford to keep machinery lying idle. The old Maxim-Nordenfelt was now obsolete; and the newer gun, known as the pom-pom, was rapidly taking its place. He therefore hoped the Government would be able to see their way to instal machinery in the Enfield Factory for the manufacture of pom-poms.

Question put, and negatived.

Original Question again proposed.

*SIR ARTHUR HAYTER asked with regard to the items in reference to stores whether there had been a general revision of the stores since the war. The reason for this question was, that the Director-General of Stores had stated to the Committee of Public Accounts that such a revision would take place. Of course, the amount of stores must obviously depend on what the War Office and Committee of Defence decided the strength of the Army was to be, but as he understood, there would be a general revision of all stocks, and he desired to know whether that revision had taken place.

LORD STANLEY said the revision was now taking place. Of course, so long as the war was going on articles were being manufactured as quickly as possible on the assumption that it might continue, and when the war suddenly came to an end the authorities were left with a large surplus. But in answer to the hon. Member he could say the whole matter was now being considered.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE called attention to Vote E, which contained an increased amount for new construction of £4,000 for ships. He would like to know what new vessels that was for, and for what reason the War Office embarked on a matter which would appear to belong more properly to the Admiralty. It might be better and cheaper to hire these vessels from the Admiralty and so relieve the War Office from the need of constructing vessels at all.

Lord STANLEY said this expenditure was for a special type of boat used generally for transport between various stations, but used especially for target towing. In the old days a type of boats was used which towed at a low rate of speed; under modern conditions those boats were of no use, and the War Office were now getting boats, which they could not possibly hire, of a higher steaming capacity. These boats were also being fitted in some cases with appliances so that the target could be wound up while being towed so that its speed might be accelerated. This was one of the expenses incurred in order to make more realistic the practice for the work those guns might have to do in time of war.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) said he wanted to know something about Vote K. He wanted to know why we were at war in Somaliland and why we had gone to war, and also whether the censorship with regard to matters in Somaliland—

*The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN said the hon. Member would not be in order in discussing the Somaliland expedition, as this Vote had to deal with stores and supplies only.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said in that case, as his conscience would not allow him to agree to this Vote until he had heard something more—we had just lost 1,000 camels he noticed, and he supposed these stores included camels, so that we should soon be asking for more—he moved the reduction of the vote to £20,000.

Whereupon Motion made, and Question put, "That a sum, not exceeding £4,800,000, be granted for the said service."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 43; Noes, 259. (Division List No. 41.)

AYES

Bell, Richard
Bolton, Thomas Dolling
Brigg, John
Broadhurst, Henry
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burt, Thomas
Caldwell, James
Channing, Francis Allston
Crombie, John William
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dunn, Sir William
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-
Hobhouse, C. E. H. (*Bristl, E*
Hope, John Deans (*Fife, West*
Jones, Wm. (*Carnarvonshire*)
Kearley, Hudson E.
Leng, Sir John
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
M'Crae, George
M'Laren, Sir Charles Benj.
Markham, Arthur Basil
Morgan, J. Lloyd (*Carmarthen*)
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Brien, P. J. *Tipperary, N.*)
Partington, Oswald
Pirie, Duncan V.
Rea, Russell
Roberts, John Bryn (*Eifion*)
Roberts, John H. (*Denbighs.*)
Robertson, Edmund (*Dundee*)
Schwann, Charles E.
Shaw, Charles E. (*Stafford*)
Shaw, Thomas (*Hawick, B.*)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Smith, Samuel (*Flint*)
Thomas, David A. (*Merthyr*)
Tomkinson, James
Wallace, Robert
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Yoxall, James Henry

Tellers for the Ayes—
Mr. Labouchere and Mr. John Burns.

NOES.

Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Allan, Sir William (*Gateshead*)
Allhusen, Aug. Henry Eden
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Right Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. H. Sir H.
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Bailey, James (*Walworth*)
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Baird, John George Alexander
Baldwin, Alfred
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Man'r*
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (*Hornsey*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Beaumont, Wentworth C. B.
Beckett, Ernest William
Bhownaggree, Sir M. M.
Bignold, Arthur
Bigwood, James
Black, Alexander William
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Boulnois, Edmund
Bousfield, William Robert
Bowles, Capt. H. F. (*Middx.*)
Bowles, T. G. (*Lynn Regis*)
Brand, Hon. Arthur G.
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Butcher, John George
Campbell, Rt Hn J A (*Glasg.*)
Campbell, J. H. M. (*Dublin Univ*
Carew, James Laurence
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Cautley, Henry Strother
Cavendish, R. F. (*N. Lancs.*)
Cavendish, V C W (*Derbysh.*)
Cayzer, Sir Charles William

Cecil, Evelyn (*Aston Manor*)
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Chamberlain, Rt Hon J (*Birm*
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Chamberlayne, T. (*South'mpt'n*
Chapman, Edward
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Collings, Right Hon. Jesse
Colomb, Sir John Chas. Ready
Colston, Chas. Edw H. Athole
Corbett, A. Cameron (*Glasgow*
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Cox, Irwin Edwd. Bainbridge
Craig, Charles Curtis (*Antrim, S*
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*
Cross, H. Shepherd (*Bolton*)
Crossley, Sir Savile
Cubitt, Hon. Henry
Davies, Alfred (*Carmarthen*)
Davies, M. Vaughan (*Cardig'n*
Dewar, John A. (*Inverness-sh.*)
Dickinson, Robert Edmond
Dickson, Charles Scott
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dimsdale, Rt. Hon. Sir Jos. C.
Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir Wm. Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Hart
Edwards, Frank
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Faber, E. B. (*Hants, W.*)
Faber, George Denison (*York*)
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
FitzGerald, Sir Robt. Penrose
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Firbank, Sir Joseph Thomas
Fisher, William Hayes
Fitzroy, Hon. Edw. Algernon
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S.W.*
Gardner, Ernest
Garfit, William
Gibbs, Hn A. G. H (*City of Lond*
Gibbs, Hn. Vicary (*St. Albans*
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
Gore, Hn. S. F. Ormsby- (*Linc*
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Eldon
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Graham, Henry Robert
Greene, W. Raymond (*Cambs*
Groves, James Grimble
Hall, Edward Marshall
Halsey, Rt. Hon. Thomas F.
Hamilton, Rt Hn Ld. G. (*Midx*
Hamilton, Marq. of (*Londondy*
Hanbury, Rt. Hn. Robt. Wm.
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Healy, Timothy Michael
Heath, James (*Staffords N. W.*)
Helme, Norval Watson
Henderson, Sir Alexander
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Hoult, Joseph
Houston, Robert Paterson
Howard, Jn. (*Kent Faver'h'm*
Howard, J. (*Midd., Tott'ham*
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Jebb, Sir Richard Claverhouse
Joicey, Sir James
Jones, David B. (*Swansea*)
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir J. H.
Kennedy, Patrick James
Kenyon, Hon. G. T. (*Denbigh*
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*
Keswick, William
King, Sir Henry Seymour
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*
Lawrence, Sir Jos. (*Monm'th*)
Lawson, John Grant
Leese, Sir Jos. F. (*Accrington*)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Fredk. N. S.
Lockie, John
Long, Col. Chas. W. (*Evesham*
Long, Rt. Hn. W. (*Bristol, S.*
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Francis William
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*
Lucas, Reg'ld J. (*Portsmouth*)
Macdona, John Cumming
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
M'Killop, Jas. (*Stirlingshire*)
Malcolm, Ian
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Maxwell, Rt Hn Sir H. E (*Wigt'n*
Maxwell, W. J. H. (*Dumfriessh.*
Melville, Beresford Valentine
Middlemore, Jn. Throgmorton
Milvain, Thomas
Mitchell, William (*Burnley*)
Molesworth, Sir Lewis
Montagu, G. (*Huntingdon*)
Moon, Edward Robert Pacy
More, Robt. Jasper (*Shropshire*
Morgan, D. J. (*Walthamstow*)
Morrell, George Herbert
Morrison, James Archibald
Mount, William Arthur
Mowbray, Sir Robt. Gray C.
Muntz, Sir Philip A.
Murray, Col. Wyndham (*Bath*
Murray, Rt Hn A. Graham (*Bute*
Myers, William Henry
Newdegate, Francis A. N.
Nicholson, William Graham
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Palmer, Sir C. M. (*Durham*)
Palmer, Walter (*Salisbury*)
Parkes, Ebenezer
Paulton, James Mellor
Pease, J. A. (*Saffron Walden*)
Peel, Hn. Wm. R. Wellesley
Percy, Earl
Pilkington, Lt.-Col. Richard
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Purvis, Robert
Pym, C. Guy
Quilter, Sir Cuthbert
Randles, John S.
Rankin, Sir James
Reid, James (*Greenock*)
Remnant, Jas. Farquharson
Renshaw, Sir Charles Bine
Renwick, George
Richards, Henry Charles
Ridley, Hn. M. W. (*Stalybridge*
Rigg, Richard
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Rose, Charles Day
Russell, T. W.
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford-
Sadler, Col. Saml. Alexander
Samuel, Harry S. (*Limehouse*)
Samuel, Herbt. L. (*Cleveland*)
Sandys, Lt.-Col. Thos. Myles
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (*Marylebone, W.*)
Seely, Chas. Hilton (*Lincoln*)
Seely, Maj-J. E. B. (*Isle of Wight*
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (*Renfrew*
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, H C (*North'mb. Tyneside*
Soares, Ernest J.
Spear, John Ward
Spencer, Sir E. (*W. Bromwich*)
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stewart, Sir M. J. M'Taggart
Strachey, Sir Edward
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (*Oxf'd Univ*
Taylor, Austin (*East Toxteth*)
Tennant, Harold John
Thomas, F. Freeman- (*Hastings*
Thompson, Dr E C (*Monagh'n, N*
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. E. M.
Tritton, Charles Ernest
Tufnell, Lieut.-Col. Edward
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Vincent, Sir Edgar (*Exeter*)
Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir W. H.
Walton, Joseph (*Barnsley*)
Wason, J. Cathcart (*Orkney*)
Webb, Col. William George
Welby, Lt.-Col. A. C. E (*Taunton*
Wharton, Rt. Hon. J. Lloyd
Whiteley, H (*Ashton-und-Lyne*
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Williams, Colonel R. (*Dorset*)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Willox, Sir John Archibald
Wilson, A. S. (*York, E. R.*)
Wilson, John (*Falkirk*)
Wilson John (*Glasgow*)
Wilson-Todd, W. H. (*Yorks.*)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wood, James
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, William

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Fellowes.

Original Question again proposed.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE drew attention to the minimum wage paid to persons employed in several departments under this Vote, particularly in the gun carriage department at Woolwich, and in the ammunition stores at Devonport. A large number of men were called labourers, and paid as such, who really discharged duties of quite a different description. It was unnecessary to go into the matter in detail, as the question had been discussed on previous occasions, and the Committee were doubtless familiar with the facts. These men, who in London were paid a minimum wage of 21s., and in Devonport, where house rent was also high, 19s., were really employed on most responsible duties, and, as representing an ordinary constituency as distinguished from a dockyard or similar constituency, he thought it was discreditable to the country that so low a wage should be paid to persons discharging such duties.

*MR. KEARLEY (Devonport) said that the men to whom the right hon. Baronet referred, and who in Devonport received the monstrously inadequate wage of 19s. a week, were employed in work which, if done for outside contractors, would be classified as skilled labour. Some years ago Mr. Goschen, as First Lord of the Admiralty, promised that a thorough enquiry should be made into the rates of pay prevailing in the various localities, but that promise, as far as he knew, had not been redeemed. He hoped the Secretary of State, who was responsible at all events for the men employed under the War Office, would make a statement as to the intentions of the Government in regard to the matter.

SIR JOHN GORST (Cambridge University) said that in Committee of Supply and in the House, he had repeatedly protested against the practice of paying a man as one kind of workman when he was really doing the work of another workman. Since the year 1892, a Rosolution had been passed to the effect that it was the duty of the Government to treat these men the same as ordinary employers would, and give them wages according to the service they performed. He was under the impression that that Resolution had been observed, and that the grievance complained of so many years ago had been remedied. He was very sorry to hear from the speeches he had just heard that he was labouring under a delusion; and it showed how extremely difficult it was to get the Department to depart from any evil when it was once established.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.) said that as he had dealt with this question on former occasions, he would be very brief. There were a considerable number of men working for the Government at the wage of 21s., and a limited number were receiving only 19s. per week. Although these men received only 19s. per week, he was told that their real wages were more, because they could earn certain sums of money by being placed on piece-work. If there was one thing these men objected to, it was being given a low living wage, and then having to work at high pressure in order to bring that wage up to the normal wage for unskilled labour throughout the area of London.

THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: I must point out to the hon. Member that this Vote is not for unskilled labour.

CAPTAIN NORTON said he was under the impression that previous speakers were permitted to deal with this question, and amongst the men at Woolwich there were men who were not skilled labourers, but who were utilised for shifting stores from place to place. There were a number of engineers' labourers, and they had to do stevedore and other work. His contention was that no man employed by Government should be employed at a lower rate of wages than the men employed by the municipalities throughout the area of the County of London This was a matter of grave injustice and the men looked upon it as such. This was one of the things—which he knew from experience—that those who worked under the War Office at Woolwich felt very keenly, and he begged to move a reduction of the entire Vote by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £4,819,900, be granted for the said Service."—*(Captain Norton.)*

*MR. DUKE (Plymouth) asked the Committee to consider what the risks were which men incurred when employed from day to day in a Government factory where explosives were manufactured, and where shells were charged. He thought a man who was exposed to these risks ought not to be paid a wage of 19s. per week. That was one of the rates of wages at Bull Point. A considerable number of men were employed at this wage, and they felt it was something in the nature of a scandal to the public service that work of that kind should be remunerated in such a way. He was aware that they could always get men to do this work, but it had been decided before now in Parliament that the Government should not take advantage of the labour market in this way to force men to work under dangerous conditions at a wage which could not possibly be a living wage. Any one who knew the conditions of life in the Three Towns knew that 19s. a week was not a living wage. It was a very disagreeable thing for a Member representing a naval port or a dockyard town to be continually bringing these matters before the Committee; but if his right hon. friend would look into the question, he would find that the state of things existing was a real reproach to the public service which should be removed.

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) said he had not the advantage of representing a dockyard or an arsenal constituency, but he did take an interest in the wages of unskilled labourers generally in this big city; and he said frankly that t did seem ridiculous that the Government should insist upon contractors paying, in the carrying out of Government work, the current rate of wages for the district, while the Government themselves did not comply with that condition. Under the custody and issue of stores there were dock labourers, engineers' labourers, and store-keepers assistants, who received wages as low as 21s. and 19s. per week. Whether it be at Woolwich, Devonport, or Portsmouth, he considered 19s. per week was miserably inadequate for a married man with a wife and, perhaps, two children. Without any electoral pressure he put it to the Secretary of State for War whether the time had not arrived when the Government should put its house in order, and pay the same rate of wages which they insisted upon contractors paying to their men. Take, for example, the store labourers at Woolwich. They handled stores of a heavy character, which were sometimes dangerous in manipulating; and when a man with a wife and two or three children was receiving only 21s., it must be admitted that it was below what private employers paid for similar work almost in the same district. The scavengers of the London Borough Councils received from 26s. to 30s. per week, with sick pay and a week's holiday every year. In his Majesty's Arsenal at Woolwich the men were paid only 21s. per week. He wished to remind the Committee how a man receiving 21s. per week had to live. He got 21s. for forty-eight hours work, and out of that total one-third would have to be paid for rent. If he was a father and a good husband, he could not get two or three rooms for less than 7s. a week. The result was that his children would have to live mainly on tea, and bread and butter, the wife would go without substantial food, and the husband would not be able to develop sufficient energy to give the Government value even for the low rate of pay he received. He appealed to the War Office to raise the wages from 21s. to 24s., which was below the average, and he did so not only in the interests of the lowly paid men, but in order to enable the Government to get out of the men a reasonable minimum of work, which he did not believe they could get out of the low wages paid at Woolwich. He believed that the dearest labour was cheap labour, and it was due to the fact that the American labourer was paid much higher wages that he gave a greater reproductive return in proportion. They could not expect men to maintain their physique and give a good return upon such low wages. He believed that where they had low wages they had always redundant labour. If they were paying 900 labourers 21s.

per week, it would be much better to pay 800 24s. per week and allow the other 100 to find employment elsewhere. With cheap labour they did not get the same output as they would get if they gave the men from 24s. to 30s. a week. He appealed to the Government to raise the minimum to 24s. a week. He had himself always believed that the dearest labour was cheap labour.

CAPTAIN NORTON said that what was now asked for the dockyard men was already recognised by the War Office with respect to the policemen who were on duty in the vicinity of those buildings where specially dangerous work was carried on. The policemen received 1s. extra wages when on this duty, although the men who were actually doing the work received nothing extra.

MR. BRODRICK said everybody knew that usually the dockyards went against the Government of the day. There were some reasons why they should do so. A notable one was what was going on at Woolwich. It was absolutely necessary to reduce the output at the close of the war. The question of wages was looked upon in the House up to recent times as a matter of supply and demand. That attitude had been abandoned in favour of paying the local rate; and it had been found that men preferred a lower rate of wages with constant employment under the Government than a higher rate under an employer whose supply of work was inconstant. Some time ago he had held an inquiry at Woolwich as to this subject, and he found that rent unfortunately went hand in hand with a rise of wages. He had taken special care to inquire among the men as to what they were paying in rent; and several workmen assured him that on the last occasion on which there had been a rise of wages it was promptly swallowed up, because the owners of the houses in the district immediately raised the rent to the same extent. He believed, therefore, that if the Government were to give a rise of wages all round at Woolwich it would have a general effect on rent. Neither was it fair that the Government should be guided by the wages paid by the trade contractors to labourers with whom those in the Government service might be compared. The general scale of wages for labourers was formerly 17s. a week, now it was 21s., with allowances to be added for sick pay, medical attendance, and the general advantages of Government employment. These might be estimated as being equivalent to another shilling a week. He would undertake, however, in each case of the lowest wage to have the question looked into again in concert with the Admiralty, but he could not promise the hon. Member for Battersea that as a result wages would be raised from 21s. to 24s. while the Government were getting excellent labourers at 21s.

*MR. CROOKS said the problem they had to face in regard to wages was a difficult one. He maintained that it was not cheap for the Government to pay men 21s. per week, although other employers might be able to get them for that amount. If the men had more money they would be able to get more and better house accommodation, and the ratepayers would be able to save a substantial sum which was now paid for medical orders. The President of the Local Government Board knew that in London, in consequence of overcrowding, these medical orders were issued to the people who were living under the conditions under which people must live who were only earning 21s. per week. That was not sufficient to find food, let alone shelter. An order had been issued by the Local Government Board instructing Boards of Guardians to feed the inmates of workhouses properly. The minimum scale laid down for persons in workhouses was of such a character that no man with a family could approach if he was only earning 21s. per week. He urged that the men in the employment of the Government should at least have a Local Government Board existence, if nothing more. If the nation was saving in employing men at 21s. per week, there might be something to be said for it, but they positively lost by it. There had been discussions as to the physique of the men in the Army and the Navy, but if a man brought up a family on wages of 21s. a week, they need not expect that his sons would have a chest measurement like he had. They had been told that there were no miserable people under the British flag, but those who said that would find plenty of miserable people if only they looked downward instead of upward. The best service could not be got out of an ill-paid man. A master might say to his ill-paid workman: "You are not giving value for the money," but that workman might well reply, "I give value for all the money I get." If they wanted a man to serve them well they must feed him well, and that could not be expected to be done on 21s. a week. The argument used about rent would not hold water. Even in Woolwich a way would be found of getting round the housing problem, if it did interfere with private enterprise. At present workmen had to live in slums for which they were charged the rent of first-class houses. If the Government did not interfere in this question of housing, an organisation would be got up to compel the erection of houses which could be let at such rates as a workman could afford to pay. Why should a workman have to pay as high as 50 to 75 per cent. of his wages for house room? If it were only known what struggles these poor people had to make for a bare existence there would not be so much talk about this great nation and this Imperial race. The Government should set an example to other employers by paying the best rate of wages with the view of getting in return the best service.

Sir JOHN GORST said that eleven years ago a Resolution was moved when the House was going into Committee of Supply, which was accepted by the Government of the day as a Resolution that was to apply to all Government establishments, and not to the naval establishments only. This Resolution was passed unanimously—

> "That in the opinion of this House no person should in His Majesty's naval establishments be engaged at wages insufficient for proper maintenance, and that the conditions of labour as regards hours of work, wages, insurance against accident, provision for old age, etc., should be such as to afford an example to private employers."

That Resolution ought to have been acted upon by the naval and military authorities ever since.

Mr. JOHN BURNS said that before the Committee went to a Vote it was only fair to the Secretary for War that they should recognise the spirit in which the right hon. Gentleman had replied to the criticisms. The Secretary for War had promised that he would take an opportunity, in conjunction with the Admiralty, of considering the wages of the lowest paid employees engaged by both Departments. As far as that went it was satisfactory; but there should be something more than mere consideration. He believed that the introduction of the eight hours day in all the Government establishments had screwed up the intensity of the workmen at their work, had increased the quality, the value, and the quantity of the output in the shorter working day. He contended that what they asked for was not a bribe to the workmen, but in the interests of good physique, and a better output. They pleaded for fair play and equal rights for all white men, whether employed by contractors or by the State. There should be a determination to get rid of criticism both inside and outside the House on the wages question, by making the State "toe the line" with the best private employers, and instead of discussing whether their workmen should be paid 19s. or 20s. per week they would have time to discuss properly Imperial problems in the House of Commons. The London County Council, which employed 12,000 men, found no difficulty in dealing with the wages question. They paid the current rate of wages, and if a man did not do his work, out he went. Their rate of wages was 24s. a week.

Mr. BRODRICK said that he had already promised to consider this question, but he reminded the Committee that during the discussion it had not been shown that the Government were paying less than the current rate of wages. One of the things which had been pressed most strongly on the Government was that they should not pay wages beyond the point which private employers could pay, and for which really good men could be obtained. He fully recognised that the spirit of the Resolution passed by the House of Commons should be carried out, and he claimed that so far as his Department was concerned, they had acted in that spirit.

Captain NORTON said that he had proved to the Committee that at Siemen's works at Woolwich the men were paid 23s. a week.

Lord HUGH CECIL (Greenwich) said there was no want of sympathy for the condition of the labourers who had no bigger wage than 21s. a week. But this was not a matter that could, or ought—and he believed the workmen agreed in this—to be determined by considerations of charity. What the workmen desired was what they called fair wages, but what was a fair wage was rather a difficult matter to determine. The governing consideration ought to be that Government employees should be paid at least as generously as other employees, and that when wages were rising, the Government should not lag behind, and when wages were falling they should not be the first to lower them. He felt he should be guilty of gross inconsistency if, after the recent debates advocating economy, he did not support the Government so long as they carried out the spirit of the Resolution and the principle of the model employer.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 70 Noes, 196. (Division List No. 42

AYES.

Allan, Sir William (*Gateshead*)
Bell, Richard
Black, Alexander William
Bolton, Thomas Dolling
Bowles, Capt. H. F. (*Middx.*)
Brand, Hon. Arthur G.
Brigg, John
Broadhurst, Henry
Burt, Thomas
Caldwell, James
Channing, Francis Allston
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*
Crooks, William
Davies, Alfred (*Carmarthen*)
Davies, M. Vaughan (*Cardig'n*
Dewar, John A. (*Inverness-sh.*)
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Elibank, Master of
Fenwick, Charles
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Eldon
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Griffith, Ellis J.
Hardie, J. Keir (*Merthyr Tyd*
Hayter, Rt Hon Sir Arthur D.
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemphill, Rt. Hon. Chas. H.
Hope John Deans (*Fife, West*
Jones, David B. (*Swansea*)
Jones, Wm. (*Carnarvonshire*)
Kearley, Hudson E.
Labouchere, Henry
Leng, Sir John
Levy, Maurice
Lough, Thomas
M'Crae, George
M'Govern, T.
M'Laren, Sir Charles Benj.
Markham, Arthur Basil
Mitchell, Edw (*Fermanagh, N.*)
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Palmer, Sir C. M. (*Durham*)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pease, J. A. (*Saffron Walden*)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Rea, Russell
Roberts, John Bryn (*Eifion*)
Roberts, John H. (*Denbighs.*)
Rose, Charles Day
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbt. L. (*Cleveland*)
Schwann, Charles E.
Shaw, Charles E. (*Stafford*)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, H C (*North'mb. Tynesid*
Smith, Samuel (*Flint*)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Thomas, Sir A. (*Glam., E.*
Thomas, F. Freeman- (*Hastings*
Thompson, Dr E. C (*Monagh'n N*
Warner, Thos. Courtenay T.
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Wilson, John (*Durham, Mid*)
Wood, James
Younger, William

Tellers for the Ayes—Captain Norton and Mr. John Burns.

NOES.

Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Right Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Austin, Sir John
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Baird, John George Alexander
Baldwin, Alfred
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (*Manch'r*
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (*Hornsey*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Beckett, Ernest William
Bignold, Arthur
Bigwood, James
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith-
Bousfield, William Robert
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Butcher, John George
Campbell, Rt Hn J A (*Glasg.*)
Campbell, J. H. M. (*Dublin Univ*
Carson, Rt. Hn. Sir Edw. H.
Cautley, Henry Strother
Cavendish, R. F. (*N. Lancs.*)
Cavendish, V. C. W. (*Derbyshire*
Cayzer, Sir Charles William
Cecil, Evelyn (*Aston Manor*)
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Chamberlain, Rt Hon J (*Birm*
Chamberlain, Rt Hn J. A. (*Worc.*
Chamberlayne, T. (*Southmptn*
Chapman, Edward
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Collings, Right Hon. Jesse
Colston, Chas. Edw H. Athole
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Corbett, A. Cameron (*Glasg.*)
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Cox, Irwin Edwd. Bainbridge
Craig, Charles Curtis (*Antrim, S*
Cranborne, Viscount
Cross, H. Shepherd (*Bolton*)
Crossley, Sir Savile

Dickson, Charles Scott
Dimsdale, Rt. Hon. Sir Jos. C
Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A Akers
Doxford, Sir Wm. Theodore
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Hart
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Faber, Edmund B. (*Hants, W.*)
Faber, George Denison (*York*)
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
FitzGerald, Sir Robt. Penrose
Fitzroy, Hon. Edw. Algernon
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S.W.*
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, HnA.G.H (*City of Lond*
Gibbs, Hn. Vicary (*St. Albans*
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
Greene, W. Raymond (*Cambs*
Groves, James Grimble
Halsey, Rt. Hon. Thomas F.
Hanbury, Rt. Hon. Robt. Wm.
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Healy, Timothy Michael
Heath, James (*Staffords, N. W*
Henderson, Sir Alexander
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Hoult, Joseph
Houston, Robert Paterson
Howard, Jno. (*Kent Faver'h'm*
Howard, J. (*Midd., Tott'ham*
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Jebb, Sir Richard Claverhouse
Jessel, Capt. Herbert Merton
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir J. H.
Kennedy, Patrick James
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*
Keswick, William
King, Sir Henry Seymour
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*
Lawrence, Sir Jos. (*Monm'th*)
Lawson, John Grant
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Fredk. N. S.
Lockie, John
Long, Col. Chas. W. (*Evesham*
Long, Rt. Hn. W. (*Bristol, S.*
Lowe, Francis William
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*
Lucas, Reginald J. (*Portsmouth*
Macdona, John Cumming
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
M'Killop, Jas. (*Stirlingshire*)
Malcolm, Ian
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Maxwell, RtHnSirH.E (*Wigt'n*
Maxwell, W. J. H. (*Dumfriessh.*
Melville, Beresford Valentine
Mitchell, William (*Burnley*)
Molesworth, Sir Lewis
Montagu, G. (*Huntingdon*)
Moon, Edward Robert Pacy
More, Robt. Jasper (*Shropshire*)
Morgan, D. J. (*Walthamstow*)
Morrell, George Herbert
Morrison, James Archibald
Mount, William Arthur
Mowbray, Sir Robt. Gray C.
Muntz, Sir Philip A.
Murray, RtHnA. Graham (*Bute*
Murray, Col. Wyndham (*Bath*)
Newdegate, Francis A. N.
Nicholson, William Graham
Nicol, Donald Ninian
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Palmer, Walter (*Salisbury*)
Parkes, Ebenezer
Peel, Hn. Wm. R. Wellesley
Percy, Earl
Pilkington, Lt.-Col. Richard
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Purvis, Robert
Randles, John S.
Rankin, Sir James
Reid, James (*Greenock*)
Renwick, George
Ridley, HonM.W. (*Stalybridge*)
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford-
Sadler, Col. Saml. Alexander
Samuel, Harry S. (*Limehouse*)
Sandys, Lt.-Col. Thos. Myles
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (*Marylebone, W.*)
Seely, Chas. Hilton (*Lincoln*)
Seely, MajJ. E. B. (*Isle of Wight*
Seton-Karr, Sir Henry
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (*Renfrew*)
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Smith, Jas. Parker (*Lanarks.*)
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir John M.
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Talbot, RtHonJ. G. (*Oxf'd Univ*
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. E. M.
Tufnell, Lieut.-Col. Edward
Valentia, Viscount
Vincent, Sir Edgar (*Exeter*)
Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir W. H.
Webb, Col. William George
Wharton, Rt. Hon. J. Lloyd
Whiteley, H (*Ashton-und-Lyne*
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Williams, Colonel R. (*Dorset*)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Willox, Sir John Archibald
Wilson, A S. (*York, E. R.*)
Wilson, John (*Falkirk*)
Wilson John (*Glasgow*)
Wilson-Todd, W. H. (*Yorks.*)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Fellowes

Original Question again proposed.—

And, it being after half-past Seven of the Clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Resolution to be reported upon Monday next; Committee also report Progress; to sit again this evening.

EVENING SITTING.

SUPPLY [4TH ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

NAVY ESTIMATES 1903–4.

1. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £1,186,300, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expenses of Naval and Marine Pensions, Gratuities, and Compassionate Allowances, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

*MR. KEARLEY (Devonport) said that two years ago the Government, for the first time, had accepted the responsibility and decided to give pensions to the widows of seamen and Marines who lost their lives in warlike operations, prior to which there was no liability; but the widows of men killed accidentally in the service received nothing from the State, whereas pensions were paid to the widows of naval and Marine officers who lost their lives in the service, whether in warlike operations or otherwise. The pensions paid to the widows of officers amounted this year to £134,500, and in addition there was a sum of £12,000 in compassionate allowances to their children. The pensions paid to the widows of seamen and Marines killed in warlike operations amounted to only £235. The widows of men killed otherwise than in warlike operations were relieved out of Greenwich Hospital Fund, which was not State money suplemented in the case of dramatic disasters, such as the loss of H.M.S. 'Victoria'—by public benevolence. The allowance to widows paid out of the Greenwich funds was a paltry 3s. 6d. per week. He wished to know whether the State appraised a life forfeited in the service of the State during warlike operations at a higher value than the life, for instance, of a coast guard, who turned out, maybe, on a stormy winter's night to save life and lost his own in the endeavour. If that were so it was a most scandalous thing. He urged that the Admiralty should bring pressure to bear upon the Treasury to pay pensions to the widows of seamen and Marines, as well as to the widows of officers killed in the service of the State, whether in war or in peace. To support his contention he was fortified by the Resolution carried in this House in 1901, that the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Acts should, with modification, be applied to this class of public servants. He was informed that the outside charge on the Greenwich Hospital Fund payable to widows as pensions was £5,500, and that an additional 40 per cent. would cover the cost of the extension of the pension to those he had referred to, so that for £7,000 a year the Government could meet the legitimate demand he made. The cause was a just and worthy one, and should be recognised by the Government. He begged to move the reduction of the Voe by £100.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £1,186,200, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Kearley.*)

*MR. REGINALD LUCAS (Portsmouth) said this part of the question was raised the other night, when he spoke at such length as he thought proper, and, therefore, it was unnecessary to again enter into the question deeply. It was, however, a matter in which he had been interested for some time, and about which he could not fail to feel strongly, representing as he did a naval district. Of all the questions which had been laid before him, and which made demands upon the Admiralty and Exchequer, there was none with which he had more sympathy and which, in his judgment, commended itself to the Committee more than this question of pensions. His hon. friend opposite had brought forward the question of the widows of seamen and Marines killed by accident or drowning, and had named various instances where life had been lost. He would like especially to allude to the case of the "Viper." The "Viper" was lost during the naval manœuvres. In the case of the naval manœuvres the ships must necessarily undertake extreme liability, and even extra danger. There was no comparison between the Army and naval manœuvres. The hon. Member for Dumbarton had frequently conducted operations of troops in time of peace, and he would bear him out in saying that the troops might storm an impregnable position, make frontal attacks, and do anything they liked in time of peace without incurring any danger. But in naval operations the conditions were very different, for in naval operations they had to anticipate as far as possible all that would occur in time of war; they had to learn in time of peace what would happen in time of war; and to do that sailors and marines had to face perils which soldiers never had to undertake. In this case a ship was lost and men's lives were sacrificed, and the widows left a charge upon the country. But these widows were not charged upon the country at large, but upon the Greenwich Hospital Fund.

There was another instance. A few days ago a destroyer was going across the harbour at Portsmouth, and by ill-luck ran foul of a wire hawser, and two men were killed; and here again was an instance of want of efficiency. The report of the Court-martial which he had read brought to light the fact that the telephone frequently worked wrong on board this boat; and that the man in charge of the telephone at that particular moment was a man who did not know how to work it. But the point which arose out of it was this—one married man was killed and one unmarried man. The relatives of the unmarried man received a gratuity while the widow of the married man received a pension from Greenwich Hospital. These pensions ought not to be a charge on this Fund The Duke of Edinburgh's Committee in 1885 laid it down that the funds of Greenwich Hospital ought to be devoted to old seamen, and that was the purpose to which the Fund should be legitimately applied. Only half the Fund, however, was devoted to that purpose, and the rest went to charges which reduced the amount available for its legitimate purposes. This charge for the widows and orphans of seamen killed by accident or drowning ought to be removed from the Greenwich Hospital Fund, and ought to be made a public charge, because, without entering into the history of Greenwich Hospital, it was never intended that this charge should be made upon it. This was not a new point, for twice during the autumn session he inquired whether this charge might not be transferred from the Greenwich Fund, and on the 18th December last the First Lord of the Treasury informed him that no decision had been arrived at at present, but he held out hopes that at an early date he might give a favourable decision to the effect that this charge would be taken off the Greenwich Hospital Fund. They were still waiting at the end of March for that decision, and he would like to ask whether any information had come to the Admiralty to take the step foreshadowed by the Prime Minister. This was a simple matter, free from difficulties. The charge should be removed from this charitable fund, and as matters stood he must support the Motion.

MR. GODDARD (Ipswich) said the discussion was largely due to the fact that there was a sense of unfairness in the way pensions were administered. There was a feeling that officers were treated very much better than the ordinary seamen. There was a case mentioned in the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General which was a good illustration of what he meant. It was the case of a lieutenant of the Royal Marines who had retired on half-pay in March, 1869, after a service of four years and two months, in consequence of the report of his Colonel that he was extravagant, irregular, intemperate, and worthless as an officer. He died in April, 1901, and the Admiralty awarded a pension of £40 to his widow and a compassionate allowance of £10 per annum to his daughter. Article 2193 of the King's Regulations said that pensions should only be granted to the relatives of officers and men for good and faithful service rendered. The Comptroller and Auditor-General, in this particular case, invited an explanation from the Admiralty; and in reply was informed that the Lords of the Admiralty fully scrutinised the services of the officer and considered that he had rendered good and faithful service. He thought it would be clear to the Committee that if that were the principle on which pensions were given the complaints which were heard were justifiable. In other cases, where no complaint could be made against deceased seamen, the pensions awarded were small, paltry, and altogether inadequate.

SIR WILLIAM ALLAN (Gateshead) said he was led to believe a few years ago that the Secretary to the Admiralty intended to take this matter up, but nothing had been done, and they were again brought face to face with what he called a gross injustice. Why should there be a distinction drawn between loss of life while on duty and loss of life in action? Where was the difference? He knew not. If a number of bluejackets on a gunboat which went down lost their lives, not in action, their widows would, forsooth, get a miserable pension from the Greenwich Fund of from 3s. 6d. to 5s., and for each child only 1s. 6d. The Greenwich Fund was not Government money at all; it was the growth of years from the savings of the bluejackets themselves. But if bluejackets were killed in action their widows would receive from 5s. to 10s., and each child from 1s. 6d. to 2s. What was the difference between the two cases? He had looked at the Estimate, and, although he did not want to use strong language, it appeared to him to savour very much of favouritism. He found that the widows of fifteen captains got £2,415, whereas the widows of twenty-one seamen and Marines only got £235. The whole list was unworthy of the greatness and generosity of this nation. They grudge nothing for repairs; but when it came to providing for the widow and orphan of the man who lost his life in the service of the country, they only gave 3s. 6d. to the widow, and 1s. 6d. to each child.

When the "Cobra" went down a fund was raised in Newcastle for the widows and orphans of the men who were lost, and several thousands of pounds were collected. The widows only got 3s. 6d. per week from the State, though he knew what the widows of others got. He appealed to the heart of every Englishman and Scotchman, and would ask was such treatment right and just? It was not. He found that 760 children of deceased Naval and Marine officers got £10,250, or an average of £13 each as a compassionate allowance, but there was no compassionate allowance for the children of deceased bluejackets. That pained him very much. What he should like to see would be the unification of the Greenwich Fund and the Patriotic Fund, in order that there might be plenty of money to provide pensions on a uniform basis; or, better still, let them put the pensions on the Votes. His contention was, that if a man were killed in the execution of his duty he ought to be looked upon as having lost his life in the service of his country just as much as if he were killed in action. In the merchant service, if a seaman was struck by a falling block and killed, his widow would be paid at least three years' wages, but if that happened to a bluejacket his widow would have to go on the Greenwich Fund, whereas if he were shot in action she would get from 5s. to 10s. He appealed to the Secretary to the Admiralty, as one who knew the Navy, to say whether that was fair or just. Again he would repeat that his contention was that there should be no distinction drawn when a man was killed on duty. That was the crux of the whole situation; and if the hon. member went to a division, he would, for the first time, vote against the Government on Navy Estimates as a protest against what he regarded as a gross injustice.

SIR FREDERICK BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said that the right hon. Gentleman had delivered a very excellent speech, which would appeal to them all. He thought, however, the hon. Gentleman was carried a little away by emotion, because he seemed to think that a sailor should run no risks in his profession. He was anxious to give everyone what they desired; but still the difficulty of raising money had to be taken into consideration; and when the Votes were increased they had hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House seized with a fit of economy. With reference to the case mentioned by the hon. Member for Ipswich, he thought the hon. Gentleman should have stated that that case had not yet come before the Public Accounts Committee. It would be considered by the Public Accounts Committee to-morrow; and he hoped that some answer would be forthcoming from the representatives of the Admiralty. If not, he trusted that steps would be taken to prevent what he might almost call a scandal. During the years on which he had been on the Public Accounts Committee a similar case had never come before him.

MR. GODDARD said he did not remember a similar case in connection with the Navy; but he did in connection with the Army. The hon. Gentleman was quite right in saying that the matter had not yet come before the Public Accounts Committee, he merely referred to the observations of the Comptroller and Auditor-General on the case.

SIR FREDERICK BANBURY said it was a very serious case, and one which ought not to occur For his own part, he hoped it would not occur again. Still, in this particular instance, he thought the Public Accounts Committee might be trusted to deal with the question.

*MR. DUKE (Plymouth) agreed with the appeal which was put forward from the other side that the wives and orphans of seamen who had lost their lives in the Service, when not engaged in warlike operations, should be treated in the same way as those who had lost their husbands and fathers in war. Steps might be taken to provide the necessary funds for the purpose without an irregular drafe upon the funds of Greenwich Hospital. Only last week a strong case was made out in the House for addition to the funds of Greenwich Hospital to meet the proper claims made upon it. He quite agreed with the hon. Member for Gateshead, that if a man was killed on service some provision ought to be made for his wife and children. He believed the owners of merchant ships generally were, as a body, prepared to meet that requirement in the case of merchant seamen, by falling into line with other employers in the country in the matter of insurance. He could not see why the Government of this country, which, although it was alleged to be temporarily hard-up, was really a flourishing and solvent Government, should not see its way, by some system of insurance, or by some reasonable provision, to mitigate the position of widows of bluejackets killed in the Service. What did it matter to the widow whether her husband was shot dead in action or fell from the masthead. If he fell from the mast-head she had not the sympathy she would have if he met his death in action. The position of the widow of a man killed in the Service by accident was worse than the position of a widow who had lost her husband in action, because she did not receive the same sympathy and help. In the case of a widow whose husband was killed in action there was even a possibility that the Commissioners of the Patriotic Fund would find some means of doing something for her. In the case of a poor woman who found herself left destitute by her husband being killed by accident, there was no legal claim and not so much compassion. He hoped the Government would see that they ought in that respect to be model employers. We expected a great deal from seamen, and professed to depend a great deal on their devotion, but we did not give so many practical tokens of our devotion or affection for them; and for his part he would prefer that some steps should be taken, and that seamen in the service should not only feel they were generously treated, but that the wives should not feel that when the husbands had lost their lives, and they and their children had lost their maintenance by an accident in the public service, nothing was done for them as a matter of right. He hoped the Secretary for the Admiralty would hold out some hope that this position would be considered. Perhaps something could be done in the way of making the Patriotic Fund applicable, instead of keeping it locked up or treating it as a sort of *ignis fatuus* to be pursued by hon. Members whose constituents had claims upon it. If some proper provision could not be made out of the Patriotic Fund we ought to have the patriotism to make the provision out of public moneys as a matter of justice.

*SIR J. LENG (Dundee) referred to the loss of lives in the "Condor." That, he said, was a vessel which was known before she was sent to sea not to be of a seaworthy type. She was known to be exceedingly cranky, and it was understood that her commander had made representations on the subject. She was, however, sent to sea; and after leaving port was never more heard of. There was a case of a gallant captain; a man of high character in the Naval service, with officers under him who were also of good standing, and a good crew. That vessel went to the bottom of the sea, and he would like to know why the men on board her, and their widows and children, were not as fairly entitled to pensions as if that vessel had been sunk by a shot from a hostile fleet. There was also the case of those torpedo boats which buckled at sea, and in which lives were lost. And there was also the case of men killed by guns bursting during practice. Several lives had been lost in that way. What was the difference to the widows and children whether the men lost their lives in that way or in a naval engagement? There was really no difference to the men's dependents and he thought they ought to be treated in precisely the same way. Though the mercantile navy did not come within this Vote, he would like to make a suggestion which he tried to make some years ago. It would cost very little to shipowners if they insured the lives of their men who went to sea. At present the dependents of the men were entirely dependent on the generosity of the owners of the vessels. A very small sum was provided, in cases where there were total losses of vessels, for those who suffered by it. He hoped the Secretary to the Admiralty would treat this matter from an equitable point of view, and let them know what was the distinction between lives being lost at sea from accident or from the foundering of vessels in the Fleet, and lives lost in action.

MR. LOCKIE (Devonport) asked the Government seriously to consider whether it was not right and just that the widows of men killed in the execution of their duty, whether in action or otherwise, should be treated in the most generous manner possible. With regard to the veterans he should like to say that it was a great pity that the Greenwich Fund, which did not fulfil the function originally intended on account of the drains made upon it, should have to meet the contributions for widows and orphans. A large number of men were entitled by their age to receive these Greenwich pensions, and did not because they were told that the amount at the disposal of the Commissioners was not adequate to the demand, but he did not think it was a question to be considered on that narrow basis. These men were induced to join the Service upon what they understood to be specific terms—that when they reached a certain age they would receive a certain pension. They were disappointed in this. He would therefore ask the Admiralty to seriously consider the question, not whether it was legal justice but whether it was not a national responsibility resting upon them.

*THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. PRETYMAN, Suffolk, Woodbridge) said the question had been raised whether there should be a different value placed on lives lost in connection with the "Condor" and the "Cobra" and the lives lost in South Africa. He thought that question could hardly have been asked in any other way than *pro forma*, because he imagined that the hon. Member who asked it, like every one else, would give the Admiralty credit for having the same sympathy with the men who lost their lives in peace or in war. The position with regard to the pensions due to officers' widows was mainly a matter of previous arrangement between them and the State. The same rule applied to the men. He did not think the case had been put quite fairly by the hon. Member for Gateshead, whose eloquence had overpowered his reason. [Sir W. ALLAN: "Not a bit."] As to the difference between the risks of war and peace and the different treatment meted out to the widows, he would admit that he saw no difference; he quite admitted that. But it was in the question of distinction where the difficulty arose. It was said that this principle should apply equally to the Army and the Navy. Then why not the Post Office and the Police?

MR. KEARLEY: Civil servants get the advantages of the Employers' Liability Act.

*MR. PRETYMAN said that might be so, but that did not alter his case. This was not a question merely for the Admiralty. If it were only a question of £7,000 a year it would be a comparatively small matter; but it was very difficult to draw the line. As to the question of establishing a statutory pension, placed upon the State, he must point out that it would be a matter of extreme difficulty to draw the line between deaths which occurred through Service causes and deaths which did not. In the case, for instance, of a man who caught cold on a field day and died within two years the problem would be extremely difficult. He was not trying to make out a case for denying relief, but he was trying to show that the question was a large one, which required a considerable amount of thought and attention. This was the cause of the delay which had occurred. He could not go behind the answer which had already been given when it was stated that the matter was receiving consideration. There was every sympathy for cases of hardship, but it had not yet been found possible to arrive at an absolute decision on the subject. With regard to the case referred to by the hon. Member for Ipswich, he said he did not believe the officer in question was retired on the grounds mentioned, but on reduction of establishment. That made all the difference. In cases such as that of the "Condor," the "Cobra," or the explosion in the "Mars," the widow of a sailor who had lost his life only got 1s. 6d. less than was granted in connection with operations in war. In reply to the contention that an irregular use was being made of the Greenwich Fund, he said that under the original provisions governing that Fund one of its first objects was to provide pensions for widows. At present only £5,500 out of £198,000 was devoted to that purpose, which he did not think was an excessive amount, in view of the original destination of the fund. He hoped the hon. Member would recognise that the Admiralty was not wanting in sympathy with the object which underlay his Motion, and he could only repeat that the matter was under consideration.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck) said this question had not been raised as a matter of charity. It had been brought forward on grounds of justice. He for one had never been able to see why the State should be put in a more favourable position than that in which it had itself put the private employer. It was a proper thing that employers of labour in mines, on railways, and in other hazardous occupations should have laid upon them the responsibility of providing compensation for accidents which occurred in the course of the employment. Two years ago the Government accepted a Resolution, moved by the hon. Member for North Monmouth, by which they undertook the responsibility of providing for workmen in their employ advantages similar to those granted under the Workmen's Compensation Act to workmen in ordinary employ, but as yet no conclusion had been arrived at. It was now proposed to distinguish between persons killed during time of war and those killed in time of peace. So far as the position of the widow was concerned, the suffering, hardship, and privation were just as great at the one time as at the other, and the Government ought to discharge the obvious duty of providing for these widows, even if the accident happened in time of peace. It was not sufficient to say that the matter was under consideration; the time had come for definite action, and he, at any rate, could not rest satisfied while the matter remained in its present position.

MR. SEELY (Lincoln) said that, according to his recollection, it was quite understood at the time the Compensation Bill was under consideration that the Government would see that persons in their employ were treated as well as persons in civil employment. The question now at issue was a very small one from the point of view of the public finances. The sufferings to widows and children were just as great during time of peace as during time of war, while the chances of assistance from public funds were very much less, so that if any distinction was to be made he should be inclined to make more liberal provision for the sufferers by accidents in time of peace. Sufficient time had elapsed since the loss of the "Cobra" and the "Condor" to come to some decision. No one would accuse him of anxiety to increase the burdens of the country, but he certainly thought this was one of the cases in which economy was a mistake. It might be true that the people had no legal claim, but he thought the Admiralty would be well advised to consider, not how they could avoid doing it, but how they could arrange to give the same allowance to widows who lost their husbands in time of peace as was given to those who were bereaved in time of war.

MR. WILLIAM JONES (Carnarvonshire, Arfon) said the precise terms of the Resolution to which reference had been made were as follows:

> "That there is urgent need to extend the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act, with appropriate modifications, to the naval and military servants of the State who may be killed or injured in the course of their employment."

That Resolution was carried unanimously, and all expected to see it applied in a practical form to the most helpless classes of the community. It had been said that these people had no real claim. At any rate, the passing of that Resolution gave them a Parliamentary claim, and the Government should be called upon to satisfy it. Common-sense and justice demanded that the men who entered the Navy, of which we were so proud, should be properly treated. There was no disposition on either side to reduce the Votes necessary to keep intact our first line of defence, but surely it was not a wise policy to refuse the application of the principle of compensation to the men who would have to defend our shores in time of trouble. The amount required would make no appreciable difference to the sum allotted to the Navy; therefore, as it was a question, not of sympathy, but of justice, he hoped the Government would give practical effect to the Resolution the terms of which he had read.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon) said it must be clearly understood that the widows of men killed in time of peace did get allowances, but not on so large a scale as the widows of men killed in time of war. In his position he was naturally disinclined to add anything, however small, to the burdens already borne on the Estimates. He believed that the amount involved was considerably more than hon. Members seemed to imagine, because if the view now pressed were acceded to it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to avoid extending the principle to other services. It went without saying that the case which had been presented excited the sympathy of every Member of that House, and all would agree that the object with which it had been brought forward was a very desirable one. He was bound, however, to protect the Exchequer as far as he could, but if hon. Members would accept his assurance that he would go very carefully into the matter—which as yet he had not been able to do—with a view to seeing whether the natural feeling which actuated them could be met, he was prepared to give that assurance.

MR. JOHN WILSON (Durham, Mid) said that while all would agree that the keeping down of the Estimates was a very laudable object, there were directions in which economy should not be attempted, and he was unable to see why a distinction should be drawn between those who lost their husbands in time of peace and those who were bereaved in time of war. The amount of money involved in giving the extra 1s. 6d. asked for would not be a very serious matter, because, according to the Estimate for 1903–4, the pensions were to be paid to the widows and children of only twenty-one seamen and marines. What was likely to be the effect of such a discussion as this on the manning of the Navy? Young men, if they saw that this distinction was to be made in regard to their wives and families, would naturally be somewhat diffident about entering the Service. "Service" extended from the time a man signed articles until he left the Navy; it mattered not whether it was in time of war or in time of peace. He hoped the consideration the right hon. Gentleman had promised to give to the matter would result in these poor widows getting at least 1s. 6d. per week more than they were now receiving.

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE ERESBY (Lincolnshire, Horncastle) expressed his surprise that the hon. Member for Lincoln should support this proposal. Whenever there was an opportunity of voting against any increase of the Estimates the hon. Member seized it; it therefore seemed hardly consistent that on this occasion he should urge the Government to spend more money. This question no doubt presented, *primâ facie*, a somewhat hard case, but if it was to be carried to its logical conclusion, the Employers' Liability Act would have to be extended to all Government employees. That might be a good or bad thing, but those responsible for the various services had to see how best they could get the men they required, and if they found they could best get them by offering higher pay without pensions, or compensation for accidents, they were justified in so doing. It must be a question of arrangement or bargain, and at present the bargain was that the same amount of pension should not be given to the widows of men killed in time of peace as was given to the widows of men killed in time of war.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean), said that in view of the Resolution unanimously adopted by the House two years ago, the promise of the Chancellor of the Exchequer merely to consider the matter was altogether inadequate. The House had unanimously decided that this principle should be applied, and now the noble Lord spoke as though this was something new to-night. If the statement just made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been made when this matter was first raised in the House, he should have recommended his hon. friend to accept it. As a matter of fact, to-night they were getting something less than what was promised them two years ago, and the Government seemed to have entirely forgotten and ignored that Resolution. The Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke of it as a new matter.

MR. RITCHIE: The Resolution is another question altogether, while this is a specific matter.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE said the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not seem to remember the Resolution which declared that there was urgent need to extend the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act, with proper modifications, to the Naval and Military servants of the State who might be killed or injured in the course of their employment.

MR. RITCHIE: But this is a specific point raised to-night. I mean the pensions of widows due upon the death of their husbands in time of peace. As I understand, hon. Members have been urging that the Exchequer should bear the cost of the 3s. 6d. which has hitherto been paid out of the Greenwich Fund.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE said that so far as he could understand the right hon. Gentleman, his complaint seemed to be that the question had been argued as if it concerned one small portion of the general case embraced in the Resolution of the House of Commons. That Resolution more than covered this particular point. His point was, that this matter was settled two years ago, and the Resolution was unanimously carried by the House, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had just shown by his speech that the Government completely ignored that Resolution. They had never thought of it from that time to this, and it seemed now quite fresh to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Treasury Bench, with the result that the Resolution had been completely ignored.

*THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER, Belfast), W.): I think there has been no lack of sympathy shown with the views of hon. Members opposite upon his question, and I should like, before this debate comes to a close, to explain this matter for the information of hon. Members who have not been in the House the whole time. There has been, in the first place, a suggestion which I should not like to go forward as being an accurate representation of the facts. It has been suggested in the course of the debate that the difference made between the sums paid to widows of seamen dying in action and the widows of seamen dying in Service, but not in action, is not observed in the case of the widows of officers. This suggestion is made in error. The distinction is made in the case of officers and men alike. It is also not the case that there has been any forgetfulness of the Resolution passed by the House of Commons; on the contrary, the words in the Resolution suggesting a consideration of the relatives of those in Government service losing life at sea has been given effect to, and it is an entire misconception to believe that those relatives of men who lost their lives at sea in peace time are not in receipt of any compensation at all.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: We knew that at the time we debated the question.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: Very well, then; clearly the issue is not whether we are going to apply the Workmen's Compensation Act to the sailors of the Royal Navy or not, but the question is whether the compensation now given is adequate or not. I appeal to hon. Members to pay some attention to the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has said this matter is new to him, and that he desires to take into consideration the representations made to him this evening. As representing the Admiralty, I shall myself be ready to represent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that there are some risks incurred by sailors in time of peace which so closely correspond to those which they run in time if war that it is difficult to find any distinction between them. I hope that the Committee will agree to the Vote on my assurance that I will represent with absolute conviction that such cases merit the favourable attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he undertakes his consideration of this question. I believe that in this direction we shall find the solution which the hon. Member for Devonport desires. I do not think that the Committee will desire me to go further and to commit myself to any general rule that every loss of life, directly or indirectly connected with the service at sea, should be regarded as loss of life which occurred in active service or in warlike operations. If hon. Members will accept that assurance from me, I shall be satisfied, and I hope the Committee will allow us to take this Vote upon that assurance.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth) said that they were all in sympathy with the objects which hon. Members opposite had in view, but he should be sorry if the matter was pressed to a division, because he thought that after the assurance given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary for the Admiralty it would be much better to accept those assurances and not have a division.

MR. SEELY said he desired to thank the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary to the Admiralty for the manner in which they had spoken upon this question, and no doubt they would give the matter their best consideration. He had no doubt whatever as to what would be the result of the Chancellor of the Exchequer giving this matter his consideration, and the only thing he was anxious about was that those widows should have this money. He did not care whether the 3s. 6d. came out of one fund and 1s. 6d. out of another, for all he was anxious about was that the amount should be made up to 5s. He thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer would find no difficulty whatever in the matter, and by doing this he could not be accused of wild extravagance for providing this small extra sum.

Committee divided:—Ayes, 61; Noes, 135. (Division List No. 43.)

AYES.

Abraham, W. (*Cork, N.E.*)
Allan, Sir William (*Gateshead*)
Barry, E. (*Cork, S.*)
Bell, Richard
Black, Alexander William
Bolton, Thomas Dolling
Brigg, John
Broadhurst, Henry
Caldwell, James
Causton, Richard Knight
Cawley, Frederick
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*
Crean, Eugene
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M. Vaughan (*Cardign*
Dewar, John A. (*Inverness-sh.*)
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Duke, Henry Edward
Elibank, Master of
Fenwick, Charles
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Hayden, John Patrick
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-
Helme, Norval Watson
Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
Jones, Wm. (*Carnarvonshire*)
Lambert, George
Leng, Sir John
Levy, Maurice
M'Crae, George
Markham, Arthur Basil
Mitchell, Edw. (*Fermanagh, N.*)
O'Brien, Patrick (*Kilkenny*)
O'Brien, P. J. *Tipperary, N.*)
Partington, Oswald
Pease, J. A. (*Saffron Walden*)
Rea, Russell
Reckitt, Harold James
Rickett, J. Compton
Rigg, Richard
Roberts, John Bryn (*Eifion*)
Robson, William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rose, Charles Day
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbt. L. (*Cleveland*)
Schwann, Charles E.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Thomas (*Hawick, B.*)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Soares, Ernest J.
Toulmin, George
Wason, J. Cathcart (*Orkney*)
White, George (*Norfolk*)
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Wilson, John (*Durham, Mid*)
Wood, James

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
Mr. Kearley and Mr.
Reginald Lucas.

NOES.

Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Right Hon. John
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Manch'r*)
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (*Hornsey*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bignold, Arthur
Bigwood, James
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith
Bousfield, William Robert
Brassey, Albert
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cautley, Henry Strother
Cavendish, V. C. W. (*Derbyshire*
Cecil, Evelyn (*Aston Manor*)
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Chapman, Edward
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collings, Right Hon. Jesse
Colomb, Sir John Chas. Ready
Corbett, A. Cameron (*Glasg.*)
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Cox, Irwin Edwd. Bainbridge
Craig, Charles Curtis (*Antrim, S*
Cranborne, Lord
Crossley, Sir Savile
Denny, Colonel
Dickson, Charles Scott
Dimsdale, Rt. Hon. Sir Jos. C.
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir Wm. Theodore
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S. W.*
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
Gore, Hn. S. F. Ormsby- (*Linc*
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Eldon
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Greene, W. Raymond (*Cambs*
Groves, James Grimble
Hamilton, Rt Hn Ld. G. (*Midx*
Hanbury, Rt. Hn. Robt. Wm.
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heath, James (*Staffs., N. W.*)
Henderson, Sir Alexander
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Jessel, Capt. Herbert Merton
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir J. H.
Kennedy, Patrick James
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*
Lawrence, Sir Jos. (*Monm'th*)
Lawson, John Grant
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Fredk. N. S.
Lockie, John
Long, Rt. Hn. W. (*Bristol, S.*
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*
Macdona, John Cumming
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
Maxwell, W J. H (*Dumfriesshire*
Moon, Edward Robert Pacy
Morgan, D. J. (*Walthamstow*)
Morrell, George Herbert
Morrison, James Archibald
Mount, William Arthur
Mowbray, Sir Robt. Gray C.
Muntz, Sir Philip A.
Murray, Rt Hn A. Graham (*Bute*
Murray, Col. Wyndham (*Bath*)
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Palmer, Walter (*Salisbury*)
Parker, Sir Gilbert
Parkes, Ebenezer
Peel, Hn. Wm. R. Wellesley
Percy, Earl
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Purvis, Robert
Pym, C. Guy
Randles, John S.
Rankin, Sir James
Reid, James (*Greenock*)
Renshaw, Sir Charles Bine
Ridley, Hn. M. W. (*Stalybridge*
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Round, Rt. Hon. James
Sadler, Col. Saml. Alexander
Seely, Chas. Hilton (*Lincoln*)
Seely, Maj. J. E. B. (*Isle of Wight*
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Smith, H. C (*North'mb. Tyneside*
Smith, Jas. Parker (*Lanarks.*)
Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (*Strand*)
Spear, John Ward
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Talbot, Rt Hn J. G. (*Oxf'rd Univ.*
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. E. M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Vincent, Sir Edgar (*Exeter*)
Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir W. H.
Webb, Col. William George
Whiteley, H. (*Ashton-u.-Lyne*)
Williams, Colonel R. (*Dorset*)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. S. (*York, E. R.*)
Wilson, John (*Falkirk*)
Wilson John (*Glasgow*)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, William

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland- and Hood Mr. Fellowes.

Original Question again proposed.

MR. WHITLEY (Halifax) asked whether the pensions for good and meritorious services would be paid to the men when they retired, or whether they would receive them while on full pay. If given while the men were on full pay, would the pensions cease on retirement?

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER said the pensions for good and meritorious services in the Navy were given under the King's regulations. He understood that they were not drawn while the men were on full pay.

*MR. REGINALD LUCAS called the attention of the Secretary to the Admiralty to what he believed was a discrepancy in the different rates of gratuity for long service and good conduct as between Marines and seamen.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER said he was not able to give the hon. Member that information at present, but he would inform himself on the subject.

MR. WHITLEY asked whether it was the case that the pensions ceased on retirement.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER said he desired to correct the answer he had just given to the hon. Member for Halifax. It was a fact that some of the officers who received pensions for good and meritorious services were on full pay.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, Cleveland) asked whether the Committee were to understand that the officers had no other sources of income except the amounts which were put down in the Estimates.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER said these sums were additional. He was not familiar with the circumstances referred to by the hon. Member for Portsmouth, but he would look into the matter. Of course, whether the discrepancy which was stated to exist would be rectified would depend on the result of his examination.

Question put, and agreed to.

2. £259,000, Medical Establishments and Services.

MR. KEARLEY said they had heard a great deal this year from the First Lord of the Admiralty in regard to the training of the men of the Fleet. There was, he thought, one very important piece of training which had been altogether overlooked. He referred to the necessity of every man in the Navy being instructed in "first aid" to the wounded. He thought that if the Fleet came into action, in a very short time the decks of battleships and cruisers would be shambles, and he was perfectly certain that they would not have an adequate staff on board to deal with all the cases which would require immediate attention. Judging from the practice in previous wars the doctors would be below carrying on, mainly, surgical work. It was most desirable in the interest of humanity that every man on board should be able to render first aid to the wounded. The very fact of how a man was handled after being wounded might make all the difference between his losing his life and being saved. There were doctors on board the Fleet and attached to the depôts and he did not think there would be the slightest difficulty in imparting to young sailors elementary instruction of the kind he proposed. He also suggested that the Admiralty should have a reserve of doctors who could be called upon in the event of war breaking out.

*SIR J. COLOMB said he believed the intention of the hon. Member for Devonport was good, and no doubt there were certain men to whom his suggestion regarding instruction in first aid might be made to apply. The instruction could be given without any expense by the doctors on board the ships and at the depôts. The instruction, he thought, should be confined to those holding positions on board ship who could best be spared in action. He disagreed with the statement of the hon. Gentleman that the ships in war would be shambles. Everything in modern experience showed that that was not so; the ships and crews would be destroyed together. In the old days in naval warfare great damage could be inflicted on the *personnel* of the ships and the ships survive, but that was not the case now. The statistics regarding the war in which the Japanese Fleet was engaged not long ago showed that at Yalu there was enormous loss in the medical branch, but when the details were examined it was seen to be due to a great explosion caused in a part of one ship. The suggestion that there should be a reserve of doctors was really a very minor matter. A large reserve of doctors was necessary for a military force, because the losses on land were largely due to diseases arising from insanitary conditions. In the Navy, war did not change the sanitary conditions, and so the number of doctors required could be easily estimated.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER said that both matters had already engaged the attention of the Admiralty. The Admiralty were already arranging for a reserve of medical officers, and their efforts had met with a most gratifying response from the medical profession.

*MR. GROVES (Salford S.) said he wished to make a further suggestion with reference to the medical staff of the Navy. He believed that with regard to medical officers in the Navy, and especially those on foreign service, there was very great danger of their not being in that position of up-to-date knowledge which was so necessary for those who might have surgical work to perform. His suggestion was that medical officers in the Navy should go through a hospital course from time to time to make themselves acquainted with the latest surgical and medical practice, in which science was constantly introducing developments and improvements.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER said that the hon. Member's suggestion had been anticipated by the action of the Admiralty. The sanction of the Treasury had been already obtained to a scheme by which each year fifty medical officers would take a post-graduate course in the medical schools.

The Vote was agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum not exceeding £15,500 be granted to His Majesty, to defray the expense of martial law, including the cost of Naval prisons at home and abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1904."

*MR. KEARLEY said he had given notice of his intention to move a reduction of the Vote by £100. He had for some years taken action with the view of obtaining a remedy for the grievance felt by marine officers on account of their being prevented from sitting on courts-martial when afloat. This matter had been under discussion in the House for at least twelve years. The disability was very much resented by the marine officers. There was a considerable amount of jealousy and prejudice against the marines on the part of the naval officers. Everybody knew it. The naval officer wished to do the best he could for himself, but in doing that he was restricting all the privileges to his own rank and class. He thought this question was first raised in 1892 by Sir John Pope Hennessy, who pressed it on the attention of the Admiralty. The noble Lord the Secretary of State for India, who was then First Lord of the Admiralty said that he did not personally see why the change proposed should not be made, and he gave a distinct pledge that he would so amend the Naval Discipline Act as to remove the grievance. The present Secretary to the Admiralty in 1893 addressed a question to the then Secretary of the Admiralty in which he asked what steps had been taken to carry out the promise of the First Lord of the Admiralty that a clause would be inserted in the Naval Discipline Act to allow members of the Royal Marines to sit on courts-martial afloat when members of that corps were being tried. And the reply of the First Lord was that this question could only be dealt with by legislation, and that it would be considered when a Bill to amend the Naval Discipline Act became necessary. The present Secretary to the Admiralty was committed very deeply on this question.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £15,400, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Kearley.*)

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER said that any proposal of that kind mentioned by the hon. Member would involve new legislation.

*THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN said that the hon. Member would be out of order in discussing upon the Estimates any proposal involving new legislation.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER said that the Naval Discipline Act of 1866 was quite definite on this matter; Section 58 of that Act provided as follows:—

> "No officer shall be qualified to sit as a member of any court-martial held in pursuance of this Act unless he be a flag officer, captain, commander, or lieutenant of H.M. Navy on full pay."

*MR. KEARLEY said he could hardly understand that the Deputy Chairman ruled that any matter requiring legislation could not be raised on the Estimates.

*THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN said he was quite clear on the point that any proposal for new legislation had always been ruled out of order in discussing the Estimates.

*MR. KEARLEY submitted that there was here no question of new legislation at all. The Admiralty, by a stroke of the pen, could issue an order to secure what he wanted.

*THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN said that the Secretary to the Admiralty had clearly stated that new legislation was required, and therefore the hon. Member was out of order.

*Mr. KEARLEY said he hoped he would have another opportunity of raising this question.

Mr. RUNCIMAN (Dewsbury) said that last year he had drawn attention to the salary of the chaplain at Lewes Naval Prison. That clergyman had only to look after the prisoners and the staff, and he was paid a salary of £402, allowance in lieu of house £50, and civil allowances £48—in all, £500. The governor of the prison was only paid £370, although under another Vote he received allowances which made up his total income to £700. The local medical practitioner, whose duties were not very small, received only £100 per annum, and the chief warder £106. The naval prison at Bodmin did without a chaplain at all, the chaplain of H.M.S. "Duke of Wellington" doing all that was necessary, and receiving £50. He asked how it was that this very remunerative post was maintained at Lewes, for the chaplain had only to minister to 124 prisoners and twenty-four of a staff, for which he received £500—a sum which, he ventured to say, would be regarded as particularly large in most parishes in England. He reminded the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Admiralty of a promise he had made last year to inquire into the position of the chaplains of naval prisons, and perhaps the hon. Gentleman would explain why this comfortable billet at Lewes had been created and preserved for this particular clergyman.

*Mr. PRETYMAN said the appointment of this clergyman, and the salary he received, were due to his seniority in the Navy. It was considered necessary that a long-service Chaplain should be appointed at Lewes. The prison at Bodmin was a mixed establishment, and the Chaplain was appointed by the Prison Commissioners, and the salary paid out of the Civil Service Vote.

*Mr. REGINALD LUCAS said he did not know how they could bring up this question of the position of Marine officers on courts-martial except by the very crude method of dividing against the Government. He differed from his hon. friend the member for Devonport, who said that there was a jealousy between the two branches of the Service.

*The DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN said the hon. Member was out of order in again raising this question, because it had been ruled over and over again that proposed new legislation could not be discussed on the Estimates.

Mr. RUNCIMAN said that the explanation of the hon. Gentleman as to the Chaplain at Lewes was the same as that given last year. Might he ask whether, in accordance with the promise given last year, an inquiry had been made into the question of the position of the Chaplains at naval prisons, and whether anything had been done?

Mr. WHITLEY asked whether it was really necessary to have a Chaplain at a salary of £500 per annum to look after 124 men. There should be some statement from the Government whether they could not see their way to make an arrangement by which the services of this clergyman should be employed elsewhere, where greater opportunities would present themselves for the exercise of his talents.

*Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER said that last year he did promise to make an inquiry into this matter, because he did not know the facts. Now he knew the facts, which were quite simple. The Chaplain at Lewes was entitled by reason of his long service and seniority as a naval chaplain to the pay mentioned, and he was employed at Lewes because he was a most suitable officer for the post. The prison at Lewes ought, in the opinion of the Admiralty, to have the services of a clergyman of wide experience of life and of the naval service. This clergyman was receiving the same salary he would be entitled to in any other sphere to which he might be transferred, and therefore there was no extra expense involved in the arrangement. He thought the Admiralty were entitled, in their discretion, to decide after consultation with the Chaplain of the Fleet, what Chaplain could be employed at this place with the greatest advantage to the Navy.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 43; | Noes, 125. (Division List No. 44.)

AYES.

Abraham, W. (*Cork, N.E.*)
Beaumont, Wentworth C. B.
Black, Alexander William
Brigg, John
Caldwell, James
Causton, Richard Knight
Channing, Francis Allston
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*)
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-
Helme, Norval Watson
Jones, Wm. (*Carnarvonshire*)
Joyce, Michael
Lambert, George
Leng, Sir John
Levy, Maurice
Lough, Thomas
Lucas, Reg'ld J. (*Portsmouth*)
M'Crae, George
Markham, Arthur Basil
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, Patrick (*Kilkenny*)
Pease, J. A. (*Saffron Walden*)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Reckitt, Harold James
Rigg, Richard
Roberts, John Bryn (*Eifion*)
Robson, William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rose, Charles Day
Samuel, Herbt. L. (*Cleveland*)
Shaw, Thomas (*Hawick, B.*)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Toulmin, George
Ure, Alexander
Wason, J. Cathcart (*Orkney*)
White, George (*Norfolk*)
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Wilson, John (*Durham, Mid*)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
Mr. Kearley and Mr. Runciman.

NOES.

Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Right Hon. John
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Man'r*
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (*Hornsey*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bignold, Arthur
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Bousfield, William Robert
Brassey, Albert
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cavendish, V C W (*Derbysh.*)
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Chapman, Edward
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
Collings, Right Hon. Jesse
Corbett, A. Cameron (*Glasg.*)
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Cox Irwin Edwd. Bainbridge
Craig, Charles Curtis (*Antrim, S*
Cranborne, Viscount
Crossley, Sir Savile
Dalkeith, Earl of
Denny, Colonel
Dickson, Charles Scott
Dimsdale, Rt. Hon. Sir Jos. C.
Disraeli, Coningsby Ralph
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir Wm. Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Ed.
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S.W.*
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
Gore, Hn. S. F. Ormsby- (*Linc*
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Green, W. Raymond (*Cambs*
Groves, James Grimble
Hamilton, Rt Hn Ld. G. (*Midx*
Hanbury, Rt. Hn. Robt. Wm.
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Healy, Timothy Michael
Heath, James (*Staffs., N. W.*)
Henderson, Sir Alexander
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Jessel, Capt. Herbert Merton
Kennedy, Patrick James
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*
Lawrence, Sir Jos. (*Monm'th*)
Lawson, John Grant
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Fredk. N. S.
Lockie, John
Long, Rt. Hn. W. (*Bristol, S.*
Lowther, C. (*Cumb. Eskdale*)
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*
Macdona, John Cumming
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
Maxwell, W. J. H. (*Dumfriessh.*
Mitchell, Edw. (*Fermanagh, N*)
Morgan, D. J. (*Walthamstow*)
Morrell, George Herbert
Morrison, James Archibald
Mount, William Arthur
Mowbray, Sir Robt. Gray C.
Murray, Rt Hn A. Graham (*Bute*
Murray, Col. Wyndham (*Bath*)
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Palmer, Walter (*Salisbury*)
Peel, Hn. Wm. R. Wellesley
Percy, Earl
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pretyman, Earnest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Purvis, Robert
Randles, John S.
Reid, James (*Greenock*)
Renshaw, Sir Charles Bine
Renwick, George
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomson
Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Round, Rt. Hon. James
Russell, T. W.
Sadler, Col. Samuel Alexander
Seely, Charles Hilton (*Lincoln*
Seely, Maj. J. E. B. (*Isle of Wight*
Smith, H C (*North'mb. Tyneside*
Smith, James Parker (*Lanarks*
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (*Strand*)
Spear, John Ward
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Jn. M.
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (*Oxf. Univ.*
Thompson, Dr. E C (*Monagh'n N*
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. E. M.
Valentia, Viscount
Vincent, Sir Edgar (*Exeter*)
Walrond, Rt. Hn Sir William H
Whiteley, H (*Ashton-und-Lyne*
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Williams, Colonel R. (*Dorset*)
Willox, Sir John Archibald
Wilson, John (*Falkirk*)
Wilson John (*Glasgow*)
Wood, James
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported upon Monday next; Committee to sit again upon Monday next.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Read the third time, and passed.

POOR PRISONERS DEFENCE BILL.

Read a second time, and committed to a Select Committee.

Adjourned at five minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 27th March, 1903.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with.

Tynemouth and District Tramways [H.L.].

The same was ordered to lie on the Table.

Jewish Colonisation Association Bill [H.L.].

Presented [pursuant to leave given yesterday]; read 1^a, and referred to the Examiners.

Life Association of Scotland Bill [H.L.].

Reported, without Amendment.

Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Bill [H.L.].

The King's consent signified; and Bill reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Tynemouth and District Tramways Bill [H.L.].

Read 2^a (according to order).

Nantwich Urban District Council Bill [H.L.].

Western Trust Bill [H.L.].

Read 3^a, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

South-Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway Bill [H.L.].

South-Eastern and London, Chatham and Dover Railways Bill [H.L.].

Sutton Coldfield Corporation Bill [H.L.].

Cardiff Railway Bill [H.L.].

Manchester Southern Tramways (Lancashire) Bill [H.L.].

Manchester Southern Tramways (Cheshire) Bill [H.L.].

South Lancashire Tramways Bill [H.L.].

Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Bill [H.L.].

North Cheshire Tramways Bill [H.L.].

Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Earl of Lauderdale be proposed to the House as a member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Earl of Camperdown; and that the Earl of Lauderdale be Chairman of the said Committee; read, and agreed to.

Dublin Improvement (Bull Alley Area) Bill.

Brought from the Commons; read 1^a; and referred to the examiners.

Great Western Railway (Pension Fund) Bill.

Brought from the Commons; read 1^a; and referred to the examiners.

PETITIONS.

SHOPS (EARLY CLOSING) BILL [H.L].

Petition in favour of; of Reading Early Closing Association; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EMIGRATION.

Report on the Emigrants' Information Office, for the year ended 31st December, 1902.

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS (IRELAND).

Return of the prices of agricultural products and live stock, for the year 1902.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.

Annual report of proceedings under the Tithe Acts, 1836 to 1891, the Copyhold Act, 1894, the Inclosure Acts, 1845 to 1899, the Agricultural Holdings Acts, 1883 to 1900, the Drainage and Improvement of Land Acts, the Universities and College Estate Acts, 1858 to 1898, the Glebe Lands Act, 1888, etc., etc., for the year 1902, together with a summary of the powers and duties of the Board of Agriculture under the statutes, and the method of administration.

Annual reports of proceedings under the Diseases of Animals Acts, the Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Acts, etc., etc., for the year 1902.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES (1901).

Summary tables, area, houses, and population, also population classified by ages, condition as to marriage, occupations, birthplaces and infirmities.

Presented [by Command] and ordered to lie on the Table.

HOUSE OF LORDS OFFICES.

Leave given to the Committee to report from time to time; First Report from the Select Committee made, to be printed, and to be considered on Monday next. (No. 25.)

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION BILL [H.L.].

Read 3ª [according to order]; an Amendment (Privilege) made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

SHOPS (EARLY CLOSING) BILL [H.L.].

Amendments reported [according to order], and Bill to be read 3ª on the second sitting day after the recess at Easter.

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN (AMENDMENT) BILL [H.L.].

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

*LORD ALVERSTONE: My Lords, this Bill has been prepared in order to remedy certain practical defects that have been found to exist in carrying out the Act of 1894. The details will, of course, require consideration in Committee, but I do not think there is anything in the clauses of the Bill to which I need call attention on the present occasion. There is, however, one rather important proposal in the Bill. I ask that a clause may be passed enabling offences under the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act to be dealt with on indictment for manslaughter. There is a difficulty at present in getting a conviction in the case of persons indicted for manslaughter when the real offence is one against the Act of 1894. The other clauses of the Bill, as I have said, deal with matters which do not require to be explained now. I have a reason for them in every case, based upon the experience and working of the Act of 1894. There are two clauses in the Bill which relate to an entirely different matter and which I do not propose to press when the Bill gets into Committee. I refer to the clauses which deal with the punishment of incest. It was in consequence of representations made to me by Grand Juries in the North of England that I introduced these clauses, but as they are likely to give rise to opposition I shall not endanger the Bill by insisting upon them and shall move their deletion in Committee. Whether your Lordships think that this Bill can be best dealt with by any particular form of Committee is a matter to which I do not attach any importance, but I am quite satisfied that as regards the great majority of the clauses they propose Amendments of the law which are really necessary having regard to the defects and omissions found by experience in the Act of 1894.

Moved, That the Bill be now read 2ª.—(*Lord Alverstone.*)

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (The Earl of HALSBURY): My Lords, with the main part of the Bill I entirely concur. It is a measure that will require consideration, and after it has been read a second time I shall move your Lordships to refer it to a Select Committee.

On Question agreed to; Bill read 2ª [according to order], and referred to a Select Committee.

COUNCIL FOR NATIONAL DEFENCE.

Order of the day read for resuming the debate on the motion of the Lord Rosebery to resolve "that this House desires to express its approval of the proposed Council of National Defence, and its earnest hope that the first efforts of that Council may be directed to the adjustment of the national armaments and to the naval, military, and financial conditions of the Empire."

Debate resumed accordingly.

*THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: My Lords, the noble Earl the First Lord of the Admiralty concluded his able speech on Tuesday night by a strong and earnest appeal that at all events care should be taken that any future reductions of military expenditure should not be made hastily and should not involve sweeping changes. As to the general advisability of that course I suppose none of us find any objection, but I venture to think that if the noble Earl is desirous of preventing that state of things, as far as he can, the best possible mode of doing so is to begin reductions of taxation at the present time. The war has come to an end; we have entered upon a time of peace. The condition of the country is not unprosperous. There is, I fear, in many quarters considerable distress, but, nevertheless, I may truly say that our prosperity is still largely maintained. But we all, I suppose, hear various rumours of a period of bad trade which is coming. I hope it may not come, but I would earnestly impress on the noble Earl and upon his colleagues that if they want this gradual reduction of taxation rather than the adoption suddenly of any sweeping measures they must take care that they are not caught by bad trade, because they may rely upon it, that not all the earnestness of the First Lord of the Admiralty or all the determination of his colleagues would be able to maintain such expenditure as we have at the present time, if unfortunately we were to find ourselves in what are ordinarily called bad times.

The noble Earl took considerable exception to the terms in which my noble friend Lord Rosebery spoke of the present burden of taxation. I do not want to enter into any dispute with the First Lord of the Admiralty upon a question of adjectives, but I venture to assert that there can be no doubt that the pressure of taxation at the present moment is heavy, that there are already signs that it is a pressure which the people of the country will not long be able to bear at its present height, and that the time has therefore come when we should recognise the fact put before us the other night by Lord Rosebery, and should set ourselves to work with determination steadily to relieve that pressure. There was one reason offered to us on Tuesday night by Lord Selborne why that course might not at present be necessary, which I confess filled me with much surprise. The noble Earl said that at the conclusion of the great war with France in the year 1815 our ancestors bore the pressure of those times and the heavy taxation which was then maintained; and, he asked, "Why should we not do so?" My Lords, I think it was a little unfortunate that the First Lord of the Admiralty should carry back our thoughts to the years which succeeded 1815, because I venture to say that the six or seven years following the great peace were some of the most unhappy years in this country, when the working classes were in the most wretched and miserable condition, and I confess it does not encourage me to advocate a system of heavy taxation when I recollect what was the condition of affairs at the time to which the noble Earl referred. They were the years of Peterloo and of the Cato Street Conspiracy. But I am bound to say, if that comparison of the noble Earl's surprised me, I was yet more surprised by the reason which he gave for our not being able now to bear taxation that was borne in 1815. I do not admit the fact. I think we are better able to bear taxation now than we were in 1815; but what was the noble Lord's reason for his statement? He said that in 1815 we had very numerous sources of taxation, but that now, in consequence of the policy of Free Trade, we had greatly limited the field of taxation. I entirely deny that that is any reason whatever why we should be less able to bear taxation than we were in the earlier period to which the noble Earl referred. But I will not go into that discussion now. I must say it does not diminish my desire for an early adoption of a more economical system when the noble Earl holds out the prospect that if we are to bear a large weight of taxation the only way by which we can do it is by returning to innumerable small taxes on many articles of consumption and to the financial policy of Vansittart.

The noble Earl told us that the present Army proposals of the Secretary of State for War were adopted very deliberately. My noble friend Lord Rosebery had appeared to intimate that they were hastily adopted; "but," said the First Lord of the Admiralty, "they were adopted very deliberately." If the First Lord means by that statement that Mr. Brodrick took three or four months to consider those proposals, and that he did not act without deliberation; that he did not go down to the War Office one fine morning and write out the whole scheme in half-an-hour, I have no doubt that is the case, but it does not appear to me that therefore it is true to say they were not hastily adopted. I think they were hastily adopted. I think it would have been far better if the Secretary of State, instead of attempting to reorganise the Army in the middle of the war, had waited till the war was over; had waited, not only for the return of the present Commander-in-Chief, however important his concurrence in the matter is, but had waited until we had had the full experience of the war, and until other experienced officers who had been serving in South Africa after Lord Roberts left had returned to this country and been able to assist the Secretary of State for War in the preparation of his proposals.

The main defence at the present moment of these proposals, as I understand it, at least as regards that Army Corps which has been most under discussion of late, rests on the needs of India. I confess I am a little suspicious that that defence is something of an afterthought. I know that somewhat alarming statements have been made in very high quarters with reference to some Indian questions. I agree with Lord Selborne that there is no necessity for our refusing to discuss the possible requirements of India. I concur with him in thinking that we may just as well discuss those requirements as discuss what is necessary for the defence of this country, but I cannot say that I think it is wise or judicious that we should have these vague and uncertain statements made which are calculated to fill the mind with considerable alarm, and out of which panic has often arisen before now. The reason why I say that in my opinion the connection of this Army Corps with the wants of India is an afterthought is this. I cannot conceive an organisation less suited to the possible military needs of India than that of one of these Army Corps. Such an Army Corps is a great body of European troops. The fighting organisation of India does not consist of large Army Corps, some of them European and some of them native. It consists of a constant intermixture of native and European troops. That is the very foundation of the military organisation of India for fighting purposes, and therefore it seems to me—perhaps the noble Earl the Under Secretary may be able to throw some other light on the subject—that if you send out a great European Army Corps to India the first thing you will have to do will be to break it up in order that the European troops may be distributed among the divisions and brigades in India, according to that organisation upon which alone an Indian Army can properly be framed. I cannot but think that the expenditure involved in the maintenance of this Army Corps is unwise and unnecessary. I quite agree with my noble friend opposite, Viscount Goschen, who said that if you were to look mainly to the defence of this country against invasion by your Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers—that is to say, by what is now called the Auxiliary forces—they would require to be stiffened by Regular troops. But then he placed the number of Regular troops that would be required for that purpose at 30,000 men, which is very different from the Army Corps which it is proposed to maintain. I venture to think that this Army Corps will not meet the requirements for which it is now said that it is intended. I think it will cast too great a burden upon the finances of the country, and that that burden will create that very reaction against which the First Lord of the Admiralty pleaded so eloquently the other night.

I must now say a few words in regard to the matter which stands first in the Motion of my noble friend Lord Rosebery — the proposed Committee of Defence; and, by the way, before I proceed to argue that question, I should like to ask what is the real name of this body. The Prime Minister and the First Lord of the Admiralty called it a Committee, but my noble friend in his Motion describes it as a Council. The point is not a large one, but, at the same time, we might just as well know what is the proper official designation of the body. I cannot help thinking that there has been considerable exaggeration in what has been said with respect to the necessity of it, and to the effect that it is likely to have. I do not want to exaggerate upon the other side, though I feel bound to say I am not prepared to express approval of this proposal. As was very well pointed out on Tuesday night, both by Lord Goschen and also, I was glad to observe, by Lord Selborne, this is not the first body of this kind which has existed, nor have the services of those which have preceded it been of a nature which ought to be overlooked. They have been very readily acknowledged by those who have had the best means of becoming acquainted with their proceedings—by Lord Goschen, a former First Lord, and by Lord Selborne, the present First Lord.

We have not heard much of what was done by the recent Defence Committee presided over by the noble Duke the Lord President of the Council, but the Prime Minister assures us that it did good service, and we accept that statement without dispute. But the peculiar distinction of all the bodies that have been mentioned is that they were either Departmental Committees, upon which only the subordinates were placed, or, at all events, no Cabinet Ministers, or they were Committees of the Cabinet of which Cabinet Ministers alone were Members. You now propose to deviate from those principles which have hitherto guided the organisation of bodies of this kind, and to create a new mixed body partly composed of Cabinet Ministers and partly of other persons. I shall have a word to say upon that in a moment, but I think it can scarcely be said that the system which has been in force in the past has prevented or interfered with the progress of military reforms. The greatest military reform of our time, that which is always spoken of with such approval and respect by my noble friend Lord Wolseley, namely, Mr. Cardwell's reform, was made without any Committee of this kind. It was made by Mr. Cardwell in consultation with his professional advisers, and, of course, was submitted to and approved by the Cabinet. Therefore it cannot be said that it is impossible to make a large, important, and successful reform in our military arrangements without a heterogeneous body of this kind. Then, of course, I may be told that what this Committee is intended to do is not only to secure reform but to co-ordinate—I think that is the word which has been generally adopted—Military, Naval, Indian, and political affairs. That no doubt gives a very large scope to the work of this Committee, but I still venture to think that it does not prove that it is the best body that could be established for the purpose.

I entirely agree with my noble friend Lord Goschen in desiring that the Foreign Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, especially the Chancellor of the Exchequer, should be put on the Committee. It is impossible that this Committee, which is heralded by such loud expressions of its great importance and high value, can discharge any such wide functions as it is proposed to give to it in regard to Naval and Military matters without touching constantly and continually on questions of finance. What will be the result? The Chancellor of the Exchequer is not to be a regular member of the Committee. He is to be called in when the Committee like to call him in. I do not think that is a position in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to be placed. I do not think it will work well. You cannot always tell in the deliberations of a body of this kind whether questions regarding finance will come into their consideration at a particular meeting or not; and suppose this dignified Committee, this Committee which is to co-ordinate everything, were to come to a decision involving an important expenditure of public money without the Chancellor of the Exchequer having been heard! You are to have upon the Committee the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for War, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and the Lord President of the Council. They are parties to this expenditure. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is not there, but hears of it when the Cabinet meets. What will be his position? How can he hope to contest it successfully; how can he hope to be heard with that openness of mind with which he ought always to be heard if this question has been prejudged in the Defence Committee? I should very much like to have heard what Sir Robert Peel, or Mr. Gladstone, or Sir M.

Hicks-Beach would have said of a proposal of that kind. I cannot think it is possible that it can work. I am afraid I must go further than my noble friend Lord Goschen, and say that if you have this Committee you must have upon it another Cabinet Minister, namely, the Secretary of State for India, and he must be accompanied by his principal military member of Council. Everything connected with the Army in this country touches India. When I was in India the Government with which I was connected undertook a great work of military reorganisation, which required that we should look at all the past proceedings in respect to the Indian Army in various directions; and one of the most startling facts produced by that inquiry was that in the eighteen years preceding that period there had been added to the military expenditure of India no less a sum than £800,000 a year. That was added without the Government of India having been consulted, or knowing anything about it until it was done. It was added by small additions here and small additions there, but the result was that the expenditure was being thus increased at the rate of nearly £1,000,000 in twenty years.

I hope that whenever your Lordships are called upon to consider questions relating to Indian expenditure you will remember how extremely limited are the sources of Indian revenue. You can hardly increase them, and those that grow, grow very slowly. To find a new tax in India is one of the hardest tasks that anyone can undertake. You must always bear in mind, when you are dealing with questions of Indian finance, when you are by the action of the Home Government throwing additional burdens on the finance of India, that you will very rapidly arrive at the end of your tether, and will not be able to get the money. We have been discussing, very naturally, as I think, the increased burden of taxation in this country, but we, at least, thanks to that system of Free Trade which does not appear to commend itself financially to the First Lord of the Admiralty, are able to bear, however much we may dislike it, and justly complain of it, a much larger extension of taxation than would be possible in India. In those circumstances I do say that if you are going to establish this Defence Committee you must put upon it the Secretary of State for India and his principal military officer. I do not at all deny what Lord Selborne said, that if you are to have this Committee it is very desirable that it should not be too large; but if you are to have it you must constitute it in such a way that it will not come to important decisions without the knowledge and behind the backs of members of the Cabinet, who are deeply concerned in the matter. Therefore, if you are to have the Committee at all you must, as it seems to me, put upon it all those Cabinet Ministers of whom I have spoken. They are pretty nearly all the most important members of the Cabinet. Why are their decisions to be taken apart from their colleagues, without consultation at the time with their colleagues, and in a mixed Committee consisting of other persons as well as themselves? In that respect I take it that the construction of this Committee has no precedent. I may be wrong in that, but I do not know of one. It will consist, as is proposed, of Cabinet Ministers, of Privy Councillors, of persons who are not Privy Councillors, of important high officials in the public services, and of subordinate officers like the Directors of Military and Naval Intelligence. When I speak of those distinguished officers as subordinate I am only speaking of their comparative official position. I quite agree that they are officers of great importance, and I can only say, upon that, that I wish the Government which was in office at the time the war broke out had more carefully studied the excellent and complete reports which had been prepared by the Intelligence Department of the War Office. Still, I do not think that so great a departure from ordinary and established custom, as is involved in the mixing up of these officers with Cabinet Ministers, has been justified by any argument I have yet heard.

We are told that it will be an admirable system, that it will supply a great want, that it will prepare information for the Prime Minister. I think the Prime Minister ought to have the fullest possible information supplied to him, but I think it might be done in another way. I have also another doubt upon the subject, and it is a grave one. I confess I am unable to dissuade myself from the opinion that the establishment of this heterogenous Committee will tend to affect the public sense of Ministerial responsibility. I know that that is denied, and, of course, in one sense it must be denied, because no administrative arrangements made by the executive Government can by any possibility affect a constitutional principle like that, but I do think it will have a tendency to diminish in the public mind and in public opinion the idea of Ministerial responsibility. We have seen more instances of late than I desire of an inclination on the part of Ministers to hide themselves behind the expert opinion of their professional advisers, and I think that evil would unquestionably be increased, and that the danger would become more imminent, if you were to establish a body of this kind, placed in the high position in which it is contemplated by this scheme that it should be placed. I have another remark to make, which, I submit, is worthy at least of consideration. You are going to put upon this Committee the Secretary of State for War and the Commander-in-Chief, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and my noble friend Lord Walter Kerr. I cannot think that there is not a risk—I do not say with the present Commander-in-Chief, nor yet, far from it, with the present First Sea Lord—if you bring the Secretary of State and the Commander-in-Chief, the First Lord of the Admiralty and the First Sea Lord as equal members of a Committee of this kind, of your weakening that confidential feeling which ought to exist between them. The Secretary of State for War ought to be in daily, in hourly, I might almost say, communication with the Commander-in-Chief. I am quite sure that the noble Earl opposite, the First Lord of the Admiralty, is in daily communication with the First Sea Lord.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (The Earl of SELBORNE): Hourly.

*THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: I am quite sure that the relations between them are of the best and most confidential nature; but bring them together as equals upon a Committee of this kind, and I think difficulties may very possibly arise between them; at least, I think that that free and confidential intercourse which is essential to the good working of the Department will be somewhat endangered. I think I might claim my noble friend Lord Goschen as not disinclined to agree with me in this respect, because he said he hoped there would be no voting. I concur with him in that hope. He said it would be awkward if there had been a discussion in the Admiralty between the First Sea Lord and the noble Earl as to whether there should be four or three new battleships, and they were to have that discussion over again in the Committee. I do not believe that danger is altogether imaginary. I think, looking to men as they ordinarily are, the difficulty will be great. I think that that perfect union which exists between Ministers and the members of the military, naval, and civil Departments in this country, which is the pride of our administrative system, might be somewhat endangered by deliberations of this kind, which are to be placed upon record, which are not to be produced, as I understand, to Parliament, but are to be there to be asked for from time to time, and to be alluded to, if not openly, at least in a manner which will be easily understood either by the Ministers themselves or by those who, having knowledge of the past records, might find themselves in opposition. Therefore I am bound to say, and I say it with great regret in one respect, because I find myself on this point differing to a certain extent from my noble friend Lord Rosebery, that I do look with some uneasiness upon the proposal to establish a body of this kind. The evils which I have ventured to suggest may, no doubt, to some extent be remedied by arrangements which may be made for conducting the operations of this body, and I am sure your Lordships will think that I have not been wrong in frankly stating the view I have been led to take of this matter. For I prefer the strict enforcement of Ministerial responsibility—I wish it was enforced more strongly than it is —to a system which it seems to me will weaken that responsibility and shield Ministers under the protection of an irresponsible Committee.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (The Earl of HARDWICKE): My Lords, the noble Marquess has been the first speaker in the course of this debate who has not been able wholly to agree with the Resolution before the House. I feel sure that he will not expect me to answer the latter part of his speech, which the House will readily understand is a matter to be dealt with by a Cabinet Minister. The noble Marquess told us in the earlier part of his observations that there were signs that the burden of taxation was beginning to tell, and he referred to a remark of my noble friend the First Lord of the Admiralty that the burden was equally heavy in 1815. I think he misinterpreted what my hon. friend behind me stated with reference to that period. I did not understand my noble friend to say that the British public were less able to bear the burden of taxation now than they were in 1815, but that the field of taxation had been narrowed since that time, and therefore people were more ready to complain. But I think the majority of the Members of this House will not hesitate to admit that, however large the cost of the late war has been, and however great has been the increase in taxation, no burden has been so little felt in the history of this or any other country. We were told the other night that our securities were falling and that the price of Consols was a great deal lower than it had been for many years. The speakers who referred to the fall in the price of Consols as evidence of financial depression seem to have forgotten that whereas they have in the past borne 2¾ per cent. inte est, they will from the end of this month forward bear 2½ per cent. interest only, which in a great measure accounts for the recent fall in the price of Consols. I have also been told on high authority that in the City of London there is no less a sum than £178,000,000 invested in South African gold stocks, and that owing to the insufficiency of labour to work the mines it is not easy to realise those investments. I believe the first sign of improvement in the supply of labour in South Africa will be followed by a large rise in the price of Consols.

I now turn to the noble Marquess's remark with regard to what he describes as the hastily adopted policy of my right hon. friend the Secretary of State for War when he introduced the present scheme of Army reorganisation. The noble Marquess considered that it would have been very much better to have delayed any scheme of reorganisation until after the war had been brought to an end. Well, my Lords, had the Secretary of State acted on those lines what would have been the result? The result would have been that to-day we should have no Army organisation. We should be beginning where we began two years ago, and it would be another two years before we should be in a position to show the public that we really had an organisation, shortly to be developed in its fullest possible sense. I think that we should have been somewhat in the position of the noble Earl with his germ of a Defence Committee. If the Secretary of State had delayed carrying out what he believed was the best policy for the military reorganisation of this country it is possible that for some reason or other it might not have been carried out at all. As it is, the organisation that we have adopted is an organisation that carried with it the fullest concurrence and whole-hearted support of the Commander-in-Chief, and when the noble Marquess says that the Army scheme is not adapted to the requirements of India, he seems utterly to forget that the scheme is based absolutely on the organisation of the Indian Army, the only difference being that the units are called Army Corps at home and commands in India.

*THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: The commands in India are composed of mixed troops. When your Army Corps get out there it will have to be broken up in order to be adapted to that system.

THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: It is quite true that troops in India are black and white. But if an Army Corps was sent to India it would not be split up, but would act as a whole. The next point to which the noble Marquess referred, was as to the title of the Committee to which the Resolution alludes. The proper title of the new body is the Committee of Imperial Defence. I may here mention that the Prime Minister is not the President of the Committee.

*THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: I did not say he was.

THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: No, but that statement was made by the noble Earl below the Gangway. The President is the noble Duke the Leader of this House. I confess that I find some difficulty in clearly answering criticisms that have been passed which it is not always easy to understand. I understand that it is contended that our Army organisation is unsuited to the needs of the Empire, and that the increased expenditure has not produced a proportionate increase in the strength and efficiency of the Army. I do not know that it is possible for any one to say to-day that what has been done has not produced a proportionate increase in strength and efficiency, because this organisation has only been in force for two years. We have admitted frankly that the scheme of Army reorganisation is not yet fully developed, and I would like to point out to your Lordships that after the Franco-German War the German nation took fifteen years to reorganise its military forces. Seeing that we have only been engaged in the reorganisation of our Army for so short a period as two years, I think we are entitled to some credit for the length we have been able to go.

I would like to point out to the House, with reference to the remarks that have been made in the course of the debate as to the Estimates for this year, that our net total for normal services is this year £27,588,000. From that sum you can take £4,300,000, which represents such charges as annuities on loans for works, fortifications, and other works expenditure not of the nature of maintenance of barracks, War Office expenditure, expenditure for horses for Home force, for manœuvres, and about £2,000,000 for stores. That leaves us a sum of £23,288,000, and I will point out how that is distributed. It is absorbed as follows: Force maintained at home to provide for the garrison of India, £2,074,000; force at home and abroad for Naval Coaling Stations (*i.e.* Bermuda, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Mauritius, Straits Settlements, and Esquimalt), £1,220,000; force at home and abroad for South Africa, £2,388,000; force at home and abroad for Egypt and Colonies, not mentioned above, £3,866,000. Therefore at the present time the total cost for forces abroad amounts to £9,548,000. I do not think anyone will suggest that it is possible to minimise in that direction. Then, for home purposes, our Regulars cost £8,740,000, the Auxiliary and Reserve forces, £5,000,000, making a total in respect of forces maintained for home purposes of £13,740,000; the total for the whole of the men at home and abroad, exclusive of the £4,300,000 to which I have referred, is £23,288,000. As to the proportions of the expenditure between the two branches of the service, it should be remembered what the Army does for the Navy. Does anyone suppose that Gibraltar, Malta, and the various coaling stations are occupied for the purposes of the Army? Of course they are entirely maintained in the interest of the Navy, and I hope your Lordships, in considering the cost of our military administration, will reckon the large sums of money that we are paying which in the nature of things would be charged to the Naval Estimates if we had not got an Army to provide the forces.

The statement that we have done nothing to increase the efficiency of the Army is a bold one for anyone to make, and it is absolutely contrary to fact. In 1895 the Army Estimates, including supplementaries, stood at £18,655,100, and the Navy Estimates at £18,701,000—that is to say, the late Government, of which the noble Earl below the Gangway was Prime Minister, considered that an equal sum should be spent on the Army as was spent on the Navy. To-day His Majesty's Government have clearly shown that they think it is right to spend a far larger sum on the Navy. I would point out that we have been able since 1895 to increase the Regular Army by—British, 57,300; Colonial and

Indian Corps, 8,860. We have increased the pay and improved the clothing. There has been an increase of over 14,000 horses, and also increases in the medical services and in the veterinary department. A new Militia Reserve has been created, and a new force of Yeomanry, which in the past numbered only 10,000, but which now consists of 24,000, and will shortly, I hope, number 30,000. These changes have not been effected without expenditure. The expenditure under the heads I have mentioned amounts to an increase of £7,680,000. These figures are interesting to those who are apt to think that though we have spent a great deal of money we have nothing to show for it. I pass to another charge that has been brought against the present system. It is said that the Army Corps cannot be sent abroad as they stand. It is perfectly true that it would be impossible at the present day to send the first three Army Corps abroad. But within a few months it will be perfectly possible to send away three Army Corps, perfectly equipped and able to go wherever they are required.

Another argument was — I think it appeared in *The Times*—that we needed an Army trained as no Army can be trained in this country. It would, of course, be an admirable thing if we could train our Army in the country in which it was going to fight; but that is not possible. There is no other country in which the Army can be trained except South Africa—and I will refer to that directly—and no other part of the Empire so suitable for training as this country. For that reason it has not been thought advisable to keep a large force abroad, except in India. Then it is asked: Why is this particular number of men necessary, and how are they to get to India in the event of an emergency? The number of troops has been fixed as the minimum compatible with the safety of the Empire. It is perfectly certain that if we were prepared to increase the number the expert authorities would welcome it, but they certainly will not consent to any reduction. The suggestion of the noble Earl that in an emergency the troops would take thirty-six days to get to India, and would therefore arrive too late, was a melancholy anticipation which I think no one else in the House will share; and if that is his only argument against having a large force it vanishes into thin air as soon as spoken. Again, it is said that our scheme does not provide for a small body of men capable of being sent abroad at a moment's notice. I deny that entirely. We could send, if necessary, to-morrow, the First Army Corps. Our system enables us to mobilise the Army Reservists, who could be called up at any moment, and we should be able to despatch a small force of 10,000 or 12,000 men abroad as quickly as it would be possible under any other organisation. Then we are told that we do not require what is called any stiffening in the Army Corps for home defence. The first three Army Corps are entirely independent of stiffening. The stiffening that we provide is 30,000 men for the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Army Corps, and the object of that stiffening is very simple. Nobody suggests that you can train the Militia and the Volunteers to be expert artillerymen. In the nature of things the Artillery require continuous and active training, and it is therefore necessary in the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Army Corps to provide Regular Artillery. It has been laid down that so far as Horse Artillery is concerned there should be no Auxiliary Artillery in existence, and that as regards the Field Artillery in the last three Army Corps the proportion to Militia Artillery should be three-fourths to one-fourth.

The Earl of Hardwicke.

The noble Duke who spoke the other night stated that according to the requirements of the existing organisation we should have to increase our establishment. The noble Duke was inaccurate in that statement. With the exception of a few thousand men that we require in order to bring up our Yeomanry to the full 30,000, we have all the men that we require for our organisation. Then the noble Duke suggested that we should have to largely increase our expenditure in the future on barracks. The money for barracks has been taken under the Military Works Loans Act, 1901, and there will be no extra charge in the future except for interest. But there will be, I confess, a small extra charge on account of the increase in the Yeomanry, the Militia Reserve, and also for the men that go to the Reserve during the next few years. I now turn to the question that has been raised as to the possibility of keeping a large force in South Africa.

I do not wish to say more this afternoon than that if we keep a full Army Corps in South Africa one of two things must happen—either it must be kept at war strength, which would entail keeping battalions at home for drafts, or we should have to create large depôts for the supply of men at great cost. If, on the other hand, we adopt the scheme that is proposed in *The Times* of making South Africa a home station, we are faced with one very serious difficulty, namely, that we would not be able to mobilise for service the troops kept in South Africa until their reserves had been able to join them from this country. Therefore, the obvious conclusion is that if you can send your Reservists to South Africa on mobilisation you could perfectly well send the complete unit. There might also be difficulties in finding sufficient transport in South Africa when the troops had to be moved, whereas, in this country we could always get transports. For that reason, among others, it is strongly felt that the most suitable base for our troops is the United Kingdom.

I now turn to one or two of the points in the speech of the noble Earl who moved the Motion before the House. At the conclusion of his speech he said that he laid his views before your Lordships as those of a common citizen, of a common Imperialist, and a common taxpayer—and, he added, as a matter of common sense. I hope he will not take it amiss if I say that from the War Office point of view I cannot accept this statement that all he said with reference to our Army organisation was a matter of common sense. I do not think it is common sense to be inconsistent, and I think I can show the House that the noble Earl made certain statements the other night which are wholly inconsistent with statements he has made on previous occasions. Speaking of the necessities of this country, and the number of men we might require, the noble Earl said he had no idea of compulsion in his head and that the nation would never undertake the burden. But speaking in this House in January, 1900, he said:—

"I do not see that it is so immeasurably remote as the noble Marquess considers that some form of compulsory service should have to be introduced to meet the growing exigencies of the Empire."*

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: Does the noble Earl call every form of compulsory service conscription?

THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: The remark of the noble Earl was in answer to Lord Newton, who interrupted the noble Earl with the observation "By conscription."

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: My point is—is there no other form of compulsory service except conscription?

THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: Having regard to the context of the noble Earl's remark, I took it to point to a modified form of conscription.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: The Militia Ballot is a form of compulsory service. Would the noble Earl call that conscription?

THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: I have always understood that there is very little difference between compulsory service and conscription.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: Oh, yes there is. I altogether repudiate the interpretation put upon what I said.

THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: I accept the noble Earl's disclaimer and will not press the point. The noble Earl said there would be 7,000,000 soldiers available if we resorted to conscription.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: I was referring to the case of Switzerland, where, without what is called conscription, but with compulsory service, they have a force of no less than 518,000 men. What I said was that, if we raised a force on the same basis, we should obtain 7,000,000 fighting men.

THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: I have been looking up the case of Switzerland and I find that the noble Earl's statement was quite inaccurate. As a matter of fact, the total number that the Swiss Republic have under their system is 242,462, and not 518,000. Then they have 225,156 men who have served but are now out of the service.

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* See (4) *Debates*, lxxviii, 38.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: But who are liable to serve.

THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: They are described as a *landsturm non armée* which I interpret to mean men who are considered not competent to hold arms. In stating that if we raised a compulsory force on the principle of the Swiss we should have a force of 7,000,000, the noble Earl is including women and children. The noble Earl said that, considering that last year we had raised 50,000 recruits, of which 8,000 were specials, we would probably on that basis only succeed in raising 42,000 men in a good year. But the fact is that though we began last year by taking specials at the rate of 33 per cent., we gradually and surely reduced the percentage; and when specials were only being taken at the rate of 7 per cent., it was decided that no more should be taken at all. I therefore think we may reasonably hope that in the coming year we shall be able to get the number of recruits we require without taking specials. Then the noble Earl said that Mr. Brodrick was considering quantity and not quality. The fact that we have done away with specials, and that the character of every recruit is now asked for before he is enlisted——

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: How long has that been?

THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: The order was issued recently. We cannot do all these things at once. I only state the facts in order that the noble Earl should understand that we do desire quality just as much as he does, and that we have taken practical steps to give effect to our desire. I turn now to certain remarks which the noble Earl made with reference to a statement of the Secretary of State for War when he introduced his Army Scheme in the House of Commons. Of course, by quoting one sentence it is not difficult to draw conclusions that perhaps are not always fair, and I would like to quote the full statement that was made by my right hon. friend when he introduced his scheme, and to which the noble Earl referred. Mr. Brodrick said—

> "I shall endeavour to lay down what it is for which we ought to prepare. In the first place, when we talk of home defence let us not confuse our minds by considering the position and action of the Navy. The Navy is obviously our first line of defence, and if all naval matters were matters of certainty we might dispense with an Army for home defence altogether. I quite agree that invasion may be an off-chance, but you cannot run an Empire of this size on off-chances. We are bound, with the Army and Navy acting together, to provide a proper system of home defence."

Therefore, it is not true to charge my right hon. friend with neglecting the part the Navy plays in the scheme of Imperial defence. The words used by him, which I have quoted, show that the contrary is the case, and when he made that statement he did it after full consideration of all the strategical questions involved, with the First Lord of the Admiralty and his own military advisers. It is, therefore, a little unjust and small that the statement should continue to be made, both on public platforms and in the Press, that the Secretary of State for War had not considered the Navy in his Army calculations. I pass now to the statement my right hon. friend made at the Colonial Conference that we had a total military force of 600,000 men. Referring to that statement the noble Earl said—

> "If they exist, how are we to employ them; if they do not exist the Estimates are too high."

I only refer to that to tell the noble Earl that they do exist. Therefore, if I can show the noble Earl that they exist at this moment, am I not right in assuming that in his opinion the Estimates are not too high?

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: That is a very large deduction.

THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: But I think it is a fair one. I assure the noble Earl that they do exist, and, therefore, I think the statement of my right hon. friend at the Colonial Conference was fully justified. Then I come to the statement of the noble Earl that if we were at war our colonies would be at war, and that every colony which knew we had 120,000 men to send out for its defence would claim the advantage of that contingent.

THE EARL OF **ROSEBERY**: Might.

THE EARL OF **HARDWICKE**: If those words mean anything at all, they seem to me to suggest that we ought not to keep this number of men for fear the colonies might wish to grab them, on an emergency, and might not take proper precautions to defend themselves. [The Earl of ROSEBERY dissented.] I thought I must be wrong, because I remember the statement of the noble Earl that the colonies had come enthusiastically to our support because they believed they were associating themselves with the most powerful Empire the world had ever seen, and that if we deprived them of that feeling, the Empire was threatened. Those were the words he used. Therefore we ought not to let the colonies feel for a moment that the Mother Country was showing any petty economy on questions of this kind. The Defence Committee will have many difficult and important questions to decide, and I trust that they will succeed in convincing the public and Parliament of the real extent and character of our military requirements; and if the Committee succeed in doing that, much will have been done to remove the discussion of Army problems from the arena of party politics, and those in authority at the War Office will be given a greater chance than they have at the present time, when every trivial mistake and every detail of administration is criticised and questioned. I might also point out that at the present time the area of the British Empire is 11,400,000 square miles, that the total population is 450,000,000—that is to say, the area is one-fifth of the surface of the globe, and the population one quarter. In face of these figures, I am sure your Lordships will at once see that the Regular forces we have, both here and in India, of British troops are not extravagant. At any rate I can state this, that the Secretary of State has no hesitation in taking the full responsibility for the strength of the organisation that he has asked Parliament to sanction, and for the expenditure that he has asked the country to meet to maintain it.

LORD **BURGHCLERE**: My Lords, I must confess that I feel very considerable diffidence in venturing to address your Lordships on this occasion—in the first place because I cannot claim in any way to be an expert on military or naval matters; and in the second place because it seems to me the ground has already been so well traversed by previous speakers, and especially by the exhaustive and luminous speech in which my noble friend Lord Rosebery introduced the Resolution before the House. My noble friend said practically all that I have to say, and it is needless to add that he said it in a manner and with an eloquence to which I cannot hope to attain. There is, as your Lordships are aware, no possibility of a division on this Resolution, and consequently there is no chance for an individual member like myself to put upon record his opinion on this important question. I would therefore ask permission to state in a few words that I am in perfect accord with the views of my noble friend who introduced the Motion, and that if a division could have been challenged I should have followed him into the Lobby with the clearest conscience and the greatest confidence. The noble Earl who has just sat down has delivered a long and technical speech into which I shall not venture to follow him. He seemed to have devoted many sleepless nights to studying the speeches of my noble friend Lord Rosebery—a very excellent practice—but I venture to think, with all submission, that the result of his studies were not so effective as the noble Earl himself seemed to fancy. The noble Earl, in answer to the statement of my noble friend Lord Rosebery that the Army scheme was produced in a hurry, said, speaking for the War Office—

> "If you had put off this organisation scheme you would have had no organisation at all."

If that was so, what, I ask, was going on in the Army during the South African War? The worst enemies of the Government have never said that there was no organisation at all; it has been reserved for the Under Secretary to declare solemnly in Parliament that, there being no organisation of any sort at the time of the South African War, it was absolutely necessary that they should put their house in order at once. If it be true, as the noble Earl suggested—following the precedent of the German Army after the Franco-German War—that it will take fifteen years to reorganise the British Army——

THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: I never suggested that.

LORD BURGHCLERE: But the noble Earl said that, if it took fifteen years to reorganise the German Army, surely it was necessary that we should begin to put our house in order at once.

THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: I merely wished to point out that we were being criticised for not having completed a scheme which had only been started two years, and I stated distinctly to the House that in a few months that scheme would be practically completed.

LORD BURGHCLERE: I am glad to think that it will not take so long as the reorganisation of the German Army. There was one sentence in the speech of my noble friend Lord Rosebery with which I should like closely to associate myself. I refer to the tribute which he paid to the present Board of Admiralty. If the First Lord will not think me presumptuous in saying so, I think he was somewhat too modest in dissociating himself from the tribute which the noble Earl paid the Admiralty. I am certain that my noble friend did not mean to separate the Board of Admiralty from its distinguished chief.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: Hear, hear.

LORD BURGHCLERE: I have on many occasions derived much instruction from the speeches of the noble Earl the First Lord of the Admiralty, but I venture to think that in some of the passages in his speech on Tuesday he was not so happy as he has been on other occasions. The noble Earl contrasted the position taken up by my noble friend at the present time with that he took up during the South African War. He said that at that time all the pressure that the noble Earl brought to bear on the Government was directed to increasing our military strength, and I suppose the First Lord deduced from that the argument that we ought at the present moment to acquiesce in this vast Army Scheme, which we are now told comprises 600,000 men. The same argument was used in another place by Mr. Brodrick, who said—

"You have forgotten the circumstances under which the Army was reorganised."

I venture to think that such a defence, if it be a defence, is a condemnation *in toto* of the scheme, because it is an admission that the scheme was brought about *ad hoc*, to meet a particular occasion. It is perfectly true that we on this side of the House, and many people in the country, asked at the time of the South African War—Why are there not more troops? The Government ought to have foreseen that more troops would have been wanted; and therefore my noble friend, like others, demanded that the Army should be increased, but it was not suggested that that should be a permanent increase. Such a defence as that is an absolute condemnation of the whole scheme, because it is an admission that it was made for a particular occasion which could never occur again. The business of the Army in the future, so far as I understand it, will be to defend the frontiers. If you had only had to defend the frontiers of Natal and Cape Colony you would not have required more than 100,000 men, but you had to do more than that. You had to conquer and annex two Republics of white men fighting for their freedom—an operation that required 300,000 or 400,000 men. But in what portion of the globe are you going to find another two Republics of white men that you might wish to annex? The business of the Army in the future, as I have said, will be to defend the frontiers, and for that purpose nothing like the great military preparations which the Army Corps Scheme involves are required. So far as India is concerned, the noble Earl the First Lord of the Admiralty found considerable fault with the statement of my noble friend with regard to the conveyance of troops to India. He said the noble Earl's statement filled him with amazement. But what was the position of my noble friend? I am far from saying that the position might not occur in which reinforcements would be required on a larger scale than has been thought necessary hitherto for the defence of that country. I hope that will be in the dim and distant future. But if your policy in India is to be changed, and if it is to be a policy of aggressive defence, I think you will want 200,000, 300,000, and perhaps 400,000 men; and that, I venture to think, will be a policy in which our military and naval authorities will not concur, which the Party on this side of the House certainly will not support, and which the majority in the country will condemn. But reinforcements, of course, will have to be sent to India. The noble Earl found fault with the statement of Lord Rosebery that it would take thirty-six days to get the troops to India. I think my noble friend was understating the case. Does the noble Earl mean to say that the Government has 126,000 men ready at this moment to start for India?

THE EARL OF HARDWICKE: We have never said so.

LORD BURGHCLERE: Then why find fault with my noble friend Lord Rosebery when he says that it would take thirty-six days to get the troops to India?

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: After they had collected the transport.

THE EARL OF SELBORNE: What I found fault with was the statement of the noble Earl that after the thirty-six days which it would take to get to India the troops would be too late.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: I never said anything of the kind. I said that when you had collected the transport —I might have added "and called out the Reserves"—and taken thirty-six days to get to India, you would arrive somewhat late at the scene of action.

LORD BURGHCLERE: Does the First Lord mean to say that when they have collected the 120,000 men, called out the Reserves, and got together the necessary impedimenta, the Government can put their finger on the transports necessary to take that number of men to India in thirty-six days?

THE EARL OF SELBORNE: My noble friend has entirely mistaken the point of my criticism. The noble Earl, as I understood him, said that to take thirty-six days to convey reinforcements to the North-West Frontier of India, no matter how many or how few, would mean that they would arrive rather late. What I say is that if we were involved in such an unfortunate war we might require them many months after.

LORD BURGHCLERE: I fail to understand the noble Earl. I should imagine that 30,000 troops always on the spot, ready to strike at once, would be worth much more than 126,000 troops in this country who would have to be conveyed to India in transports, and would not get there for some months. But I will pursue that subject no farther. The noble Earl, criticising again the speech of my noble friend Lord Rosebery, said it was better to have 50,000 Volunteers really organised than double or treble that number unorganised. Here I venture, with all humility, again to differ from the noble Earl. With regard to the Militia he may be right, but I contend that you cannot have too many citizens who have passed through the ranks of the Volunteers. What showed that better than the South African War? The first Imperial Yeomanry you sent out did very well; but who were they? They were trained men from the ranks of the Volunteers; they were men who had had military training; but the second body of Imperial Yeomanry sent out did not meet with quite the same approval from the military authorities. And why? Because they had had no military training, because we had exhausted the supply of those who had had military training in the first batch.

I have risen chiefly to express sympathy with the first portion of my noble friend's Motion, which approves the proposed Committee of Imperial Defence. I am warmly in favour of the creation of this Committee. You are giving in both Houses of Parliament by this Resolution a pledge for the first time to the nation that the Government are setting up a body whose principal duty will be to co-ordinate the two great official branches of national defence. It is a matter of the greatest importance which ought to tend to the efficiency of the Army and Navy, and to the economy of our expenditure. What are the objections that are taken to the proposed Committee? It is contended that the constitution of the Committee will lessen the responsibility of the Government of the day. For the life of me I cannot see how it can do that. When the Committee arrives at a conclusion, that conclusion will naturally be referred to the Cabinet as a whole, which will have to consider it and give their assent to it. The Ministers representing the various Departments will have to bring the schemes before the House of Commons, and if the House of Commons withholds its confidence, the Government must inevitably fall. I cannot see how such a Committee can possibly lessen the responsibility of the Government of the day. Objection has been taken to the presence on the Committee of distinguished permanent officials, but I would point out that these permanent officials have seats on the Committees of the Cabinet which are from time to time appointed. They are consulted by the Cabinet Ministers who are present, and the decisions they arrive at are reported to the Cabinet as a whole, just as I suppose the decisions of the Committee of Imperial Defence will be reported. Then something was said about voting. Is it at all likely that a body of this sort would vote? When this Committee comes to a conclusion it may often happen that of the eight members five may support one view and three another, and I can quite conceive that occasions will arise, when the recommendations are submitted to the Cabinet, when the opinions of the three will hold against the opinions of the five.

The only other objection I have heard to the constitution of this Committee is that there is no precedent for it. I have read the statement that it was such an unconstitutional body that it would make the bones of every ancient Prime Minister rattle in their graves. I hope I have a proper and fitting respect for precedent. All of us who have had experience, however small, of official life must have pleasant recollections of the soothing influence of that blessed word "precedent"; but there is such a thing as the pedantry of precedent, and it is against the pedantry of precedent that I lift up my voice. We live in times of vast expenditure and of great Imperial responsibility, and surely if we are to hold our own in the rivalry of nations we ought to be up-to-date and move with the times; and if there is one party which ought to do so more than another it is the party whose motto is "Progress and Reform." There is one thing which the country wants, and which, I venture to think, this Committee may give it, namely, a settled scheme of national defence. The man in the street thinks that those two Departments of the War Office and the Admiralty do not always see eye to eye on matters of Imperial and national defence. The man in the street often thinks that those two Departments are practically watertight Departments that have no communication with each other, and which formulate their schemes and plans independently of each other. If a tenth part of that be true—and I venture to think that more than a tenth part of it is true—surely it is that system which is responsible for the incoherencies in the scheme of defence of which we have heard so much in the past, and for the large and extravagant expenditure of which at the present moment we venture to complain.

This question is far above party. It concerns the safety of this country, of our Empire, of our food supply; it concerns the very existence of the citizens of this country. Unless I am very much misinformed there is, and always has been, a difference of opinion between the Admiralty and the War Office as to the question of invasion. The Admiralty reckon for the defence of the country on the supremacy of our ships, and the War Office formulate their plans on the failure of the Navy. Those are two entirely different schemes. For my own part, I am strongly in favour of the Admiralty view. The noble Earl the First Lord of the Admiralty stated the other night that if we pressed this too far, to what I think he called the bed rock of logic, we then had no necessity for any Army or Volunteers at all. I do not think my noble friend put that forward quite seriously. Surely he must recognise that there is a difference between having no defensive Army at all and having a great military organisation of 600,000 men, which the Under Secretary told the House the Government possessed. This country is an island; it is not part of a Continent, and consequently has not got Continental responsibilities; it has no vast land frontiers to maintain, and therefore we do not require an Army on the Continental principle. The frontiers of this country are not the chalk cliffs of the South or the sands of the East; the frontiers of this country are the Channel Fleet, the Home Fleet, and our Naval supremacy; and the sooner the disputants on this subject arrive at that conclusion, and all that that conclusion means, the sooner shall we be on the direct path to efficiency of national defence and economy of national expenditure.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: My Lords, so far as the debate has proceeded I venture to think the Government may congratulate themselves on the fact that all the speakers, with the exception of my noble friend, Lord Ripon, have approved the change which the Government propose to make in the reorganisation of the Committee of Imperial Defence. As to the details of that change, as to how far that Committee may enter into fields of work which so far as they are traversed at all, are traversed at present by other Committees belonging to the Admiralty or the War Office, or to other Departments, I think it is unnecessary for us to enter. Those questions will be solved in the course of time by the actual procedure of the Committee. In the meantime the one thing which strikes me is the amount of additional work which will be thrown upon the Prime Minister. So far from thinking this to be an evil, I believe it will be a good thing, because the Prime Minister, although he is not, as we have heard to-night, to be the President, is to be a very important member of the Defence Committee, and will be compelled to keep his eye upon the policy and the practice of his Government. I think this will necessarily prevent him from undertaking the management of one of the important Departments of State—a change which will certainly be for the general advantage of Government, of Parliament, and of the country.

It has been the habit to blame the old Defence Committee and to say that they did nothing. Well, my Lords, I never could bring myself to see upon what grounds those allegations were founded, because we never knew what the Committee of Defence did. Their only action of which I am aware, and in which I think they rendered one eminent service, at all events, to the country, was the appointment of Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener at a very critical moment in the late war to take over the operations in South Africa. If they never did anything else, they rendered a very signal and important service to the country at that time. The mind of the country, stable and steady as it was, was beginning to be most seriously perturbed by a series of misfortunes and reverses, and the appointment of Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener steadied the people and prevented what might have been, and what certainly would have been in any other country than this, a serious popular outbreak. I think that in justice to the Committee it should be remembered that the only action we know it to have taken was one of very great advantage to the country.

I now enter upon the more serious and more debatable portion of the subject that has been raised—the position of the Army and the Navy. Our attention was directed to the gigantic proportions of the Naval Estimates, and the First Lord of the Admiralty told us that he could not promise that those Estimates had attained their final magnitude, and that we must be prepared for possibly larger expenditure. Those large Estimates, Lord Goschen pointed out, had been voted without any difficulty. Why was that? Because, in the first place, the country feels that naval supremacy is absolutely vital for the existence of the Empire; and, in the second place, because it believes that the system of Admiralty organisation works with as little friction as possible. It is only just to pay some slight tribute, as, indeed, the First Lord of the Admiralty did not forget to do the other night, to the signal capacity which naval officers seem to possess, not merely of pressing forward that which from the professional point of view they consider desirable, but of being able to enter into the Parliamentary, and other difficulties of those political officers with whom for the time they are called upon to serve. If this expenditure is already so great, and if it is going possibly to be greater, is it unnatural that not merely the country but Parliament should say that it is therefore all the more necessary to inquire closely into the Estimates of the sister service?

I am not going to enter at all into the discussion of whether the Army Corps is, or is not, the right system. I am not an expert in these matters, and the expediency or not of adopting that system rests on circumstances, and depends upon conditions into which I do not feel myself able to enter with any advantage to your Lordships. I wish to approach the subject from quite a different point of view—from the point of view of the number of men. I wish at once to draw a distinction between home defence and foreign service. Some objection is being taken to a force of 30,000 men being voted for the purpose of stiffening the Volunteers and other troops serving at home. I would submit to the House that there is no reason why any exception should be taken to a demand of that sort. It does not seem to me that it is in that part of the question that there is any necessity and objection. It is only natural that there should be a force of men for this purpose, and, after all, 30,000 does not appear at all an excessive number.

But the question I want to apply myself to is that of the 120,000 men who are to be ready to go abroad. I want to know for what they are wanted. I noticed that the noble Earl the Under-Secretary in his speech to-night did not apply himself to that point at all, beyond intimating that they might be wanted for India in certain events. I would ask the House to consider, in the first place, what 120,000 men ready to go abroad means. This force means that we are, for all time to come, apparently, for it is a permanent force, to be a first-class military Power. I would submit to your Lordships that it is very doubtful whether there is any nation which could send out at once 120,000 men. It does not mean merely that you have the transport, or the men, but both, and any nation which has anything approaching to both is, I submit, a first-class military Power. To that position I am not aware that we have ever aspired, and what I should like to know is, what are the purposes for which an expeditionary force of three Army Corps is required, or is likely to be required?

My noble friend Lord Goschen, in his most instructive speech the other night said, "You must trust the Government." I think that is asking us to place a very large measure of trust in the Government. We never have had 120,000 men at one time fit to go abroad. I for one am bound to say that I feel some hesitation in placing a trust to that extent in the War Office; and if any of us feel hesitation in placing a very great measure of trust in the War Office, the War Office itself is chiefly the cause of it. I would ask your Lordships to remember our recent experience of the War Office. The noble Earl who moved this Motion pointed out, and it has been mentioned again to-night, that this scheme was brought forward very suddenly indeed, and within four months of the present Secretary of State for War taking office. As your Lordships will remember, doubts were expressed with regard to it at that time, both in this House and in the other House of Parliament, but those doubts were brushed aside. In the very next year the same Minister was obliged to make a recantation, to admit in Parliament that the scheme had not worked as quickly as he had expected, and he then proceeded to ask for time. I confess I think he would have done better, as Lord Ripon observed to-night, if, in the first instance, being at war, and being in a position of great difficulty, he had said to Parliament, "The Commander-in-Chief has only just come home. The task of reorganising the Army is an enormous one, and I must ask Parliament to give me time." If he had taken that course I am sure Parliament would most readily have given the time for which he asked. I must say I should have felt much more confidence in that course than in the course he ultimately adopted.

Passing from that, the difficulty that I, and, I think, nearly all of us, have is this, that we cannot get any further information with regard to this scheme than we already possess. Every speech that is made, every Return that is given, mystifies me more. I take the very last of them, because it is a Return which I have applied myself to and endeavoured to understand, and which leaves me with just as much information as I possessed before it was issued. Some one in the other House asked for information with regard to these six Army Corps, and he was informed that a statement would very shortly be put forward. Well, my Lords, this statement is now published, and presumably most of your Lordships have looked at it. I do not know what information you have derived from it, but I have been unable to elicit any information of any sort or kind. I will read an extract. Take the First Army Corps. This is what appears—

> "Cavalry regiments—required, five; available, five."

That is the whole of the information that is given to us with regard to cavalry regiments. We are not told where the regiments are, whether they are here or in South Africa; we are not told whether they have any horses and whether they are at full strength; no information is given of any description whatever. If you look through the Return you will see that the whole of it is exactly of that kind. I think it was the city of Washington that was once described as a "city of magnificent distances." This is simply a "Return of magnificent blanks," and the hon. Member who asked for it is a very much abler person than I am, if he has been able to derive any information from it. It has been said that this scheme was adopted deliberately, and that therefore we are bound to go on with it. Was the scheme adopted deliberately? I venture to express some doubt as to that. It is quite true that the scheme was adopted by the House of Commons, and adopted in one session of Parliament. Was it at all likely, when a scheme of that kind was put forward, and put forward with the whole strength of the Government, who, of course, possessed a very large majority, that it would not be adopted? I submit to your Lordships that the whole circumstances have since changed. In the first place, there has been a continual fire of criticism, which gives signs of increasing rather than abating; in the next place, the South African War is at an end. When that war was still proceeding the taxpayers of this country would have voted to the Government any sum of money that they required. There was no hesitation then, and there would be no hesitation, on a similar occasion, of doing the same again. But, after all, what we must look to, and what the Government ought to look to, is what are the present probabilities? It has already been pointed out by Lord Burghclere that even supposing war was to break out again in South Africa, it would be quite a different war from that of which we have had such grievous experience. I do not believe there ever will be, but if, unfortunately, there should be, a revolution in that country, it would be dealt with under quite different conditions. Where is there any probability of your requiring an expeditionary force of 120,000 men? If the Government will not give us any information we must make for ourselves such information as we can, and we must take it from the newspapers and other ordinary sources. If there is any truth in the newspapers, and in what we hear in other ways, it would appear that the feeling in France towards this country is very much better than it has been for a long time past, and although German feeling towards this country has not been very cordial, and although we may think that some German Statesmen have given utterance to sentiments they had better have kept to themselves, yet that is removed by many miles from anything approaching to the probability of a war between Germany and this country. Then we pass on to the Far East. I suppose it must be over in that direction that there is danger, if any. Well, my Lords, if that be so, why cannot we be told? These things are quite well known, and, depend upon it, official reticence will not avail this country much. If the papers are all wrong and there really is some danger of which we know nothing, then that makes one draw the disagreeable inference that we may possibly be on the brink of some war of which we have no intimation and no idea whatever.

We have been found fault with for asking questions, and those who ask questions are said, having had a hot fit, now to be having a cold one. I submit that that description is very far from being correct. When we are told that we are for the first time to have 120,000 men ready to go abroad, is it a strange thing that the taxpayers and Members of Parliament should ask for what purposes those 120,000 men are wanted? Let me further observe that in democratic countries it is impossible to avoid having questions asked, and, more than that, the taxpayers and others will think that such questions ought to be answered. The impression that remains on my mind is this. I entertain some doubt as to whether this scheme has been thoroughly thought out and considered. I remember the time at which, and the manner in which, it was brought out, and the fact that the Commander-in-Chief at that time had only recently returned from the war. The question which your Lordships should ask yourselves is—Do you feel satisfied in your minds with the present condition and future prospects of the Army? I am very glad to have heard of the change which has been made in the Committee of Imperial Defence, and I venture to hope that the very first thing to which the members of that Committee will apply their minds will be this Army Scheme, and I hope they will not be restrained from altering it, if they think a change is necessary, by any desire for consistency in their declarations and policy.

Lord BRASSEY: My Lords, the notice which my noble friend has placed on the Paper, though dealing specially with the Council of Defence, admits, and even invites, discussion on the whole subject. With regard to the Council I desire strongly to urge that upon a fitting opportunity representation should be given to the federated Governments of the self-governing colonies. It would be a step towards Imperial unity in relation to defence. Until a plan of representation has been devised, it is unreasonable to look to the colonies for subsidies sufficient in amount to give substantial aid. They can greatly strengthen the Empire by maintaining such local forces as their mounted infantry. They did splendid service in South Africa, and Reserves for the Navy have been promised in New Zealand and Australia. While the present loyal feeling remains, we may look on all Colonial forces as in the true sense Imperial.

Turning to the Navy, it is satisfactory to know that the Council finds us in a commanding position. We are above a two-Power standard, and the experience of history shows the extreme difficulty of co-operation between allied Navies. We have not attained to the position we hold without proportionate sacrifices. Adding the expenditure of India and the colonies, and the £3,000,000 to be provided under the Naval Works Act, to the Navy Estimates, the total for 1903–4 is no less than £38,000,000. Let us compare our expenditure with that of other Powers. The return laid before Parliament last session on the Motion of Sir John Colomb gives the aggregate naval expenditure on seagoing forces for the Russian Empire at £9,944,750; for Germany, £9,624,956; and for France, £12,356,602. In round figures the aggregate amount for the three Powers is £33,000,000, as against £38,000,000 for the British Navy. We have to ask ourselves, Is the burden heavier than we can bear? What is the opinion of leading authorities on this grave question? Sir Michael Hicks-Beach has been frequently quoted in this debate, but we have had other testimony, and of the greatest weight. In opening the last Colonial Conference Mr. Chamberlain insisted in impressive language on our increasing burdens.

"The weary Titan" (he says), "staggers under the too vast orb of his fate."

There is another authority to which we are bound to defer; it is that of public opinion. I live in the Rye Division, and know the arguments which were used at the recent by-election. Much was said about taxation. Criticism has been directed chiefly to the growth of military expenditure; yet even for the

Navy ever increasing charges may become intolerable, and lead to a dangerous reaction. Let us endeavour to prevent it by maintaining our naval efficiency, as far as it is possible, without adding to the public charge.

Naval expenditure may be classified under three heads — construction, manning, and works. For 1903–4 our shipbuilding Votes reach a total of no less than £10,137,000. The amount required for the British Navy depends on the expenditure elsewhere, and great as has been the increase in our shipbuilding Votes, our Estimates will not exceed the total appropriations to shipbuilding in France, Germany and Russia. It has been necessary to add to our Votes for shipbuilding. We would gladly follow a lead in the direction of retrenchment. I now turn to the votes for *personnel*. The aggregate amount for 1903–1904 is little less than £9,000,000. Adding the Vote for pensions, we have a total charge of nearly £11,000,000 for the *personnel* of the British Navy, as against approximately £5,000,000 for France, Russia, and Germany. The increase of charge has been far in excess of that in other countries. In the last ten years we have added 50,000 to the numbers and £4,000,000 in round figures to the annual cost, as against £1,000,000 for France, Russia, and Germany. If we continue to advance in the next ten years at the rate of increase shown in the manning Votes for 1903–1904, we shall have added £7,000,000 to the manning Votes. The policy we have been following for the manning of the Navy is becoming impossible. We have the disadvantage, or perhaps the advantage, of a voluntary system, as against conscription.

But there is another reason for our heavy expenditure. Great Britain stands alone among the maritime Powers in providing for manning the Navy mainly with a permanent force, and the financial results of our policy are clearly shown in the Estimates. The expenditure on the Reserves is in striking contrast to that on the permanent men. The Reserve Vote for 1903–1904 is £297,000. Ten years ago the Vote taken was £286,000. In ten years we have added £4,000,000 for the permanent forces, and for the Reserves £9,000. I contend, my Lords, that the Reserves have been starved. The training has been imperfect, the numbers insufficient. France has a Reserve of over 100,000 on the rolls, and at least 50,000 effectives; Germany has 74,000 on the rolls; the British Reserves number 34,000 all told. The growth in the numbers and cost of the permanent force has given grave anxiety to successive First Lords. In 1890 Lord George Hamilton dealt with the question of manning in his memorandum of the Estimates.

> "It would" (he said), "be unreasonable to expect that the whole of the extra force required for the next four years should be obtained simply by additions to the permanent establishment of the Navy. To the Naval Reserves we must therefore look to largely supply these prospective deficiencies."

The present First Lord suggests an obvious means by which the continual growth in the numbers of active service men may be checked. He deprecates the constant demands that are made in various quarters that additional ships should be placed in commission, with the necessary result that more active service men must be required. The remarks of Lord Selborne bring up for very serious consideration our policy in relation to foreign squadrons. In the distribution of ships in commission the essential principal is concentration at decisive points. We must keep our Mediterranean, Channel, Home, Reserve and Cruiser squadrons at full strength. We must be strong in China. On other stations, however, reductions should be possible. In the Atlantic, the Pacific, exclusive of China, and the East India Station, for many years past no squadrons have been seen under the flags of the leading maritime Powers of Europe. Single vessels have been few. Your Lordships will learn with surprise that on the stations to which I have referred we have a British force manned by more than 12,000 men. We have in commission four first-class, ten second-class, and fifteen third-class cruisers, twelve gunboats, and six sloops. Of these vessels, nearly fifty in number, the cruisers of the first and second class type alone can be considered as effective for the protection of commerce. The smaller vessels are insufficient in point of armament and speed. They would give no protection from the attacks of larger vessels. The cruisers of foreign powers, in seas so distant from any naval base, must necessarily be of large size. The complements of our small and ineffective vessels on the stations to which I have referred aggregate no less than 5,000. By gradually paying off the small vessels, their complements would become available for seven battleships, without adding to the permanent force. The training of the Navy would be improved by the change. Training in squadrons, with ample means for exercises on a large scale, does more for efficiency than the routine of a foreign squadron.

While employing our permanent force to better advantage—that is to say in manning only such ships as are really effective—prompt action should be taken in the enrolment and training of the Reserves. Sir Edward Grey's Committee have shown from how many sources Reserves can be raised to any number which may be necessary. There should be no distrust of Reserves on the point of efficiency for the duties they would have to undertake. I can contribute something on this subject from personal observation. When the fleet was assembled last year at Spithead for the Coronation Review, I took the opportunity of paying a visit to the American flagship. In reply to some remarks on the fine appearance of the crew, the Captain said:

> "You will probably be surprised to learn that out of my ship's company of 700 men no less than 135 were drawn from the inland states, chiefly from Chicago and the vicinity. These men have fully compensated for their inexperience at sea by the pains they take to acquire a knowledge of their duties."

In addition to the novices the ship carried ninety-five apprentices.

I will refer very briefly to the expenditure on Naval Works. It vastly exceeds that of the chief Powers of Europe. In the period from 1895 to 1901 the amounts authorised under the Naval Works Bills increased from £8,805,000 to £27,502,000. In addition, large sums were voted under Military Works Bills for the defence of Naval Stations, and new proposals are in the air. The projected Naval Station on the Forth is a wise step, and it brings into strong relief expenditure on some other works in progress. There is one obvious remark. If some portion of the outlay were charged on Estimates, it would ensure closer scrutiny.

The circumstances of the time call for increasing care in husbanding our resources. Further additions to Estimates may, as I have said, lead to a dangerous reaction. In dealing with the Navy let us remember that we need an Army; and in this connection I think it was a wise caution that was addressed to us the other evening by Lord Goschen. I have endeavoured to show to your Lordships that without cutting down in manning, in shipbuilding, or in any essential service, it is possible to maintain and even to strengthen the Navy without further additions to Estimates. In conclusion, I desire to make the fullest acknowledgment of the work done by the present Admiralty. They have made a beginning in the redistribution of our Squadrons. I would venture to urge that the changes they have begun should be carried further. They have taken a first step in the reinforcement of the Reserve by the appointment of Sir Edward Grey's Committee, and I must acknowledge that they were not responsible for the Naval works to which I referred as of doubtful necessity. For forty years I have watched the naval expenditure of the country, and I am bound to admit that the present administration of the service has never been exceeded in efficiency by any previous Board.

*EARL SPENCER: My Lords, I confess I think it is rather hard to have to address the House on an important subject of this kind at an hour when the Benches are certainly not full; and I may here sympathise with the noble Duke who, I am afraid, will find the House even emptier when he gets up to reply. I shall not, however, go into all the topics that have been brought forward to-night. No one has a greater right to speak on the Navy than my noble friend who has just sat down, but I almost wish that his speech had been delivered when the subject of the Estimates had been brought forward rather than on this occasion, when the debate turns mainly on this question of our Council of Defence, and although, no doubt, the end of the

Resolution refers to the necessity of co-ordinating the forces and adjusting the national armaments to the naval, military, and financial conditions of the Empire, I shall not go into that. My noble friend Lord Rosebery made a clear and able statement in support of his Motion, with almost the whole of which I most cordially agree. I do not so joyfully accept the beginning of his Motion, in which he asks the House to approve of this Council for National Defence; and in what I am going to say I regret that I do not entirely agree with him and with my noble friend Lord Burghclere, but I have very little difficulty about the position to-night; for certainly, even if I had a large majority at my back, I should not feel inclined to divide the House on the subject, and for this reason—that we know that this project is one which, as the Prime Minister has said, he considers experimental and tentative. But I agree with my noble friend entirely in thinking that it is absolutely essential that we should endeavour to co-ordinate the two services. With regard to that some instructive information was given to the House, for it was shown that the germ of the Committee of Defence was sown by my noble friend in the Government to which I had the honour to belong. The First Lord of the Admiralty said that, even if that germ was sown then, it had been crushed out or trampled down; but by whom was that done? It certainly was not by the Government of my noble friend, Lord Rosebery, because this Committee had not been formed very long before, unfortunately for the country, though perhaps to the relief of some Members of that Government, it ceased to exist.

The Earl of SELBORNE: I never said it had been trampled down. I said it had been concealed. We never heard of it.

The Earl of ROSEBERY: It had not been advertised.

*Earl SPENCER: It does not follow that because it was not advertised it did not do useful work. In that I agree with the remark of the noble Viscount opposite that in these days people are apt not to approve of things which are done in silence and in quietude. I entirely agree with the noble Viscount and with the First Lord of the Admiralty as to the work already done by different Committees. The first Committee with which I was acquainted, and the one which did more work than any other when I was at the Admiralty, was the combined Naval and Military Committee at the Colonial Office. That Committee did admirable work. Paper after paper drawn up by it came before me as First Lord of the Admiralty, and they were papers of the highest importance. Then there was the Committee which was, I believe, appointed by the Government of Lord Salisbury in 1890. That also did admirable work, and it had upon it the naval and military experts. I cannot help thinking that too often in this country we condemn a particular office, or a particular system, not really because the system itself is wrong, but because it has not been properly appreciated and handled by those who are in office. The success of a mechanism depends on the force which works it. In this case, however, we have been told by the First Lord of the Treasury that the Committee over which the noble Duke the Lord President of the Council presided did very excellent work. But now we come to the new proposal. I confess I have very considerable doubts whether the new proposal is a sound proposal, or one that is likely to sustain and improve the responsibility of the Cabinet and of the political heads of great Departments. I admit that there is high authority for the proposal, because something extremely like it was recommended by the Commission over which the noble Duke opposite presided. The report of that Commission says—

> "There might be some advantage in the formation of a naval and military council which probably would be presided over by the Prime Minister and would consist of the heads of the two services and their professional advisers."

And it ends by saying—

> "It might be summoned from time to time to consider and authoritatively decide unsettled questions between the two Departments on any matters of joint naval and military policy which in the opinions of the two services required discussion and decision. It would be essential to the usefulness of such a council and to the interests of the country that its proceedings and decisions should be

duly recorded, instances having occurred in which Cabinet decisions have been differently understood by the two Departments and become practically a dead letter."

That looks extremely like the germ of the present proposal; but the Report does not say how these different bodies are to be grouped and in what position they ought to be relative to each other, and in other passages the Royal Commission strongly supports the sole responsibility, for example, of the First Lord of the Admiralty. I confess myself that I see a very grave difficulty. However much I may admire the ability of the different officers of the Navy and the Army who are placed on this Committee, I feel extremely doubtful as to how they can carry out their duties in relation to the responsibility of the Cabinet. I am afraid that the constitution of this Committee may help to weaken that responsibility. I quote the deliberate opinion of important Members who have discussed this subject, to show how they view the matter. I find that some of these Members desire the Committee to deal with all kinds of subjects which seem to me to be of such importance that nobody except the Cabinet itself ought to deal with them. I see a statement, for instance, that this Committee would have prevented the possibility of Russian warships being allowed to pass through the Dardanelles unchallenged. The same speaker said that the incidents in regard to the search of a German mail ship during the South African War would never have happened if this Committee had been sitting. That is one view. There is another view, that the Secretary of State now has a great deal too much to do and that he will be relieved of half his responsibility if this Committee is appointed. I am not saying that His Majesty's Government hold that opinion, but that is the opinion outside; and I think such a state of things would have a very bad and prejudicial effect. I read the reference in the Report of the Royal Commission over which the noble Duke presided to the question of records. There may be considerable difficulty about that also. The moment it is known that these records are kept, those in another place who do not perceive the necessity of maintaining the responsibility of the Cabinet will endeavour to press on every possible occasion for the production of these records in order to test by them whether the Government have taken the proper course or not. I think a very great difficulty may arise.

There is another point. The First Lord of the Admiralty goes to this Committee, and he has with him the First Sea Lord and the Director of Naval Intelligence. It is possible, as the noble Viscount said the other day, that the First Lord may have had an amicable difference with the First Sea Lord as to the number of battleships necessary, or on some other subject. The First Lord of the Admiralty has absolute power to settle that himself. He may have settled it. But is that question to be raised again before this Committee? They are all to be on an equality on the Committee, so far as I can make out. The First Sea Lord has then a perfect right to raise this question. What position will the head of the Department be in then? He will be in a helpless position. The other Members of the Cabinet may decide against the First Lord who is responsible to the nation and to Parliament for his policy. I feel sure that if that took place the First Lord of the Admiralty would have to resign his position. Then there is the question of voting. I do not know what will happen. Will the First Lord of the Admiralty be followed by his two officers, and the Secretary of State for War be followed by his? It might be a very serious matter. I do not think it is right to put these officers, distinguished men as they are, in the position of having to vote when they know their vote cannot be equal to the votes of Cabinet Ministers, who eventually must be responsible. I feel these are difficulties of no small kind. No Minister directly responsible for the direction of the policy of the country would ever attempt to bring a matter before the Cabinet unless he had fully discussed it with the experts who are now to be put on an equality with him. If these distinguished officers are solely on the Council or Committee as assessors, well and good. I quite admit it is absolutely necessary that the Prime Minister should take a deep interest in these matters, and regulate any policy as between the Navy and the Army; but I cannot conceive any Prime Minister being able so to act without obtaining the best possible advice from all the experts now to be placed on this Committee. I do not think the Government will find this Committee very workable or a very useful change in the administration of the country unless they modify the proposals they have placed before Parliament.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Duke of DEVONSHIRE): My Lords, I entirely concur with the noble Earl who has just spoken as to the extremely depressing circumstances in which we are both obliged to address the House. I regret still more the absence, which I know is quite unavoidable, of the noble Earl who introduced this Motion; because it would have been far more agreeable to me to make the observations I have to make on his speech in his presence. I do not know why any noble Lord should have thought it necessary to congratulate the noble Earl upon the tone and temper of the speech he made. I do not think that on any occasion we have had to complain on either of these points of the speeches of the noble Earl. The speech he delivered the other day was a speech which, I think, we should have expected from him. It was marked by extreme eloquence though it was of a somewhat discursive character; in fact, I think very few other orators would have had the courage or the imagination to enable them to introduce the topics of the Irish Land Purchase Bill and old age pensions into the discussion of a Resolution upon the subject of this Committee. In some respects his speech appeared to me to be not altogether fair to the position of those to whom he is politically opposed. The speech omitted altogether any reference to some of the most important factors involved. But the point which struck me most in the speech was the contrast, the almost dramatic contrast, which it exhibited between the mental attitude of the speaker at the present time and on several previous occasions. I have a very accurate recollection of the noble Earl standing on the other side of this table and, in tones of the deepest emotion, reproaching His Majesty's Government with their total indifference to the universal feeling of uneasiness and anxiety prevailing in the country, and for not taking timely measures in a matter of life and death to this country. We were greatly impressed by those utterances, and we have endeavoured to secure that the noble Earl should never again be called upon to address similar appeals to us. What was it that caused at that time the anxiety and uneasiness and dread which he found in the mind of the people? We had the Volunteers, the Militia, and the other Auxiliary forces, and all the elements on which he now considers we ought to rely for the defence of the country, but still, in his opinion, we were in a state of danger and unpreparedness. We have provided establishments, and we have endeavoured to organise our naval and military forces in a manner which we hoped would secure that the noble Earl should never again be exposed to similar alarms. But we find that, far from being grateful for having taken his advice, he now tells us that in a state of profound peace we are bleeding our country to death. I think that the speech of the noble Earl shows a most extraordinary and a most dramatic contrast between the attitude assumed by a statesman of his eminence in different sets of circumstances.

The reasons of the noble Earl in bringing forward his Resolution at this particular moment are not quite obvious. I think that the present time is most unsuited for such a speech. He has brought forward a number of questions which have been discussed at great length in both Houses, and still more largely in the Press. Two votes of censure have been moved against the Government in the other House, condemning their proposals, and both Motions were defeated. The Estimates of the Government in respect of their armament proposals have been practically accepted. A vote of censure was also moved in this House, and of that I think it may rather be said that it collapsed than that it was defeated. The Committee of which the noble Earl approved is in existence and is inquiring into the very subject to which he desires attention should be directed. What then was or is the object of the noble Earl in bringing forward this Resolution at this particular moment? Is it in order to show that on this as on most other questions a considerable difference of opinion exists between himself and his late colleagues? Or is it rather to show that the noble Earl on this vital question of Imperial defence, as the Leader of a new Party, has definite ideas and principles, which it is possible may in some other changed condition of political circumstances recommend him to the confidence of the country? I doubt, if this was the intention of the Motion and of the speech, whether it will meet with much success. I think that the country will be disposed to take at their true value the declaration and criticisms of a statesman who has, for reasons that are not very easy to understand, declined to give his guidance to the country or to Parliament at the moment when that advice and guidance might have been useful to influence the decision of Parliament, and seeks by this kind of criticism to establish a reputation for superior wisdom and judgment to that either of those with whom he has been politically associated, or of those to whom he has always been in opposition.

I need only say on behalf of the Government, with reference to the Resolution, that whatever be the motives which led to its proposal, we accept its terms without reservation. We do not accept them because they are in the form of a vote of confidence in the Government, framed in much the same terms as the Resolution moved by the Prime Minister in the other House, and which might have been moved by a supporter of the Government. We accept the Resolution without reserve, because we consider that its terms describe with sufficient accuracy, although not exhaustively, the subject of inquiry which we think ought to be entrusted to this Committee. The "adjustment of the national armaments to the naval, military and financial conditions of the Empire" are words which in our opinion adequately, though, as I have said, not exhaustively describe the task—the immensely difficult and responsible task—the responsibility and the decision of which rests upon the Government, and in the execution of which we hope to receive assistance and guidance from this Committee. The adjustment, or rather the re-adjustment, of the national armaments is a subject which has been already during the present year very fully discussed throughout the country. To hear some of our critics it might be supposed that very little was left to this Committee to do, that we might almost be expected to admit that all these questions had been solved from the point of view of statesmanship and strategy, and that nothing remained but to endorse what has been submitted by our responsible advisers. That is not the opinion of the Government. The difficulties which we have met with in the organisation, and especially in the provision of supplies for the military establishments—difficulties which existed before the late war, but the gravity of which has been still more forcibly brought home to us by our experiences in the war—have led us to consider that as to some of the higher problems of Imperial defence, of defence at home, the defence of our Colonies, the defence of our commercial interests in every part of the world, they have never been adequately confronted by any Government, either on our own side or by those who have preceded us. I say higher problems of Imperial and home and colonial defence because I do not at all consider that there has been a total want of co-operation between the two Departments in the past. Lord Goschen and the First Lord of the Admiralty spoke in terms the other night, which were not in any degree exaggerated, of the value of the services rendered by the Naval, Military, and Colonial Defence Committees. It would be untrue to say that in times past, at any rate in recent years, there has been a want of useful co-operation on a great variety of questions between the members of the two Departments of the War Office and the Admiralty. But these are mainly minor, though still immensely important, questions. When we came to what I may call the higher problems of national defence, those which can only be solved by the Cabinet itself, such as those relating to the scale of our armaments and the purposes to which those armaments were to be applied, we felt that many of them never had been adequately considered as affecting both Services, and that the two Services had been treated too much as Departments on a separate basis, and not, as they ought to be, a part of a united system of defence.

*EARL SPENCER: Why?

THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE: I come now to the Committee of Defence.

It was no doubt constituted for the purpose to which I have referred. The Prime Minister has stated some of the reasons which have prevented our obtaining from that Committee all the advantages we had hoped and expected from it In the first place, it was merely a Committee of the Cabinet. The permanent members of the Services were not members of it, although they were occasionally called in for consultation. The Committee had no permanent existence. It was only called together when special questions had to be considered. The President of the Committee had no authority to convene it and to raise questions for its discussion; and, above all, the Committee preserved no records, and its deliberations had not that connecting and permanent character and, in many respects, that authority which we trust and expect will attach to the proceedings of the Council of Imperial Defence. Many questions have been asked as to the constitution of this Committee. It has been stated by the Under-Secretary to-night that the Prime Minister is not at present the President of the Committee. I, as President of the Council, have the honour of occupying that position, although, of course, it is hardly necessary for me to say that in important deliberations, wherever the Prime Minister is able to be present, his voice will be potent; but questions of less urgent and pressing importance will, doubtless, come up from time to time in which his presence may not be necessary, and we thought it better that a Minister, who is less overburdened with work than the Prime Minister himself should keep a constant and general superintendence over the proceedings of the Committee and the preparation of the material for its deliberations, which naturally devolves upon the President. The question has been asked whether this Committee is to vote. I cannot conceive circumstances arising under which such a course would be taken. The usual procedure of the Committee will be that, after full discussion of any question, it will draw up a report for the consideration of the Cabinet, and the form which any divergence of opinion will assume, will be separate reports, or the recording of a dissent to the conclusion arrived at by the majority of the members.

The noble Earl opposite concluded his criticisms of this Committee by saying that it was unnecessary. He also said that, in his opinion, the Council of Defence might tend to diminish the responsibility of the Cabinet, and he also agreed with the noble Marquess that it might affect or impair the confidential relations between Ministers and their professional advisers. I submit that these are apprehensions of so vague and shadowy a character that it is absolutely impossible to argue from them. These opinions can only be tested by experience. We see no reason why the responsibility of the Cabinet should in any way be diminished by having access to the advice of such a body. We see no reason why the confidential relations between Ministers and their professional advisers should be impaired; but if these apprehensions should be justified, the procedure, as has been stated, is only an experimental one. The Committee has probably not taken even now its final form. It is only by experience it can be ascertained whether any of the inconveniences or dangers indicated will arise. The noble Earl referred to the expenditure and scale of military establishments, and he pitied the successors of the present Government on account of the great legacy of expenditure which he thought we would bequeath to them. Now the Secretary of State for War explained very clearly in the other House where the £10,000,000 that we had added to the military Estimates had gone. The expenditure which we have added is expenditure over the greater portion of which our successors will have complete and absolute control. My right hon. friend showed that £5,000,000 of that expenditure had been incurred by the additions we had made to the regular military establishments. If our successors think these establishments are excessive, there will be nothing easier than by a stroke of the pen to reduce them to what they had been before the additions were made; and therefore full discretion is left to them in this respect. Another £2,500,000 had been added to the Estimates in order to replenish both warlike stores and stores of clothing which the experience of war showed had been kept by former Governments, and by the present Government, at an inadequate amount. That expenditure will not be a permanent charge, but will be in relief of any expenditure of that kind which our successors will have to undertake. Therefore, at least three-fourths of the expenditure which so alarms the noble Earl is either expenditure which will not recur, or expenditure over which our successors will have complete control.

The noble Earl went on to speak about the scale of our establishments, and referring to the 120,000 men who might be sent abroad, and also the 600,000 men, he said he did not know whether they existed or not. I am sorry that before the noble Earl made that statement he did not take the trouble to refer to the Army Estimates which have been laid on the table. If he had he would have seen that those Estimates deal with figures still more "spacious" than those he referred to in a vague and airy way. He would have seen that the Estimates of the year deal with a home and colonial establishment of 850,000 men, of whom 538,000 belong to the Auxiliary Forces and 281,000, including 70,000 Reserves, to British and colonial establishments for Regular troops. He would have seen, also, exactly how far these establishments were represented at the present time by effective men. He would have seen that while the establishment of Regular troops is complete up to that provided by the Estimates, the effectives of the Auxiliary Forces are still considerably below the establishment, because some of them—the Militia Reserve, for instance, and a number of the Volunteer corps—were only called into existence during the war, and the effectives have not yet reached their full establishment. It is difficult, indeed, to understand what the position of the noble Earl is in regard to that portion of these "spacious" figures which concern the Auxiliary Forces. He first says that if they exist he does not know where they are to be employed, and at the end of his speech he condemned us for not giving the Auxiliary Forces sufficient encouragement. Of course the primary object of these great auxiliary establishments is, as everyone knows, home defence. Whether those establishments are excessive or not must be a question—first, for the responsible Minister, then for the Government as a whole, and finally for Parliament to decide; but it is not easy to understand what is the position of a statesman who first charges us with providing establishments for which there is no employment, and then in the same speech reproaches us for not having appealed to the military instincts and the patriotic spirit of our country. The noble Earl did a great injustice to the Secretary of State for War by the way he represented his attitude on the subject of home defence. The noble Earl quoted from the speech of the Secretary of State the following passage, which he described as a very remarkable one—

> "When we talk of home defence, let us not confuse our minds by considering the position and the action of the Navy."

But the noble Earl omitted to quote the words which followed—

> "The Navy is obviously our first line of defence, and if all naval matters were matters of certainty we might dispense with the Army for home defence altogether. I quite agree that invasion may be an off-chance, but you cannot run an Empire of this size on off-chances. We are bound, with the Army and Navy acting together, to provide a proper system of home defence."

A more unfair representation of the attitude of the Secretary of State for War towards the Navy in regard to the question of home defence could not be conceived. The real point of the critics of our scheme is that we provide in this year's Estimates for an excessive establishment of Regular troops to be maintained at home. I would point out that, whatever opinion we may hold as to the strategical advantages we enjoy from our insular position and our naval superiority, there are certain things which the Navy cannot do. The Navy may, and I hope can, secure to us immunity against invasion of our shores on any large scale. It may relieve our island colonies such as those of Australia and New Zealand and — since the South African war — our South African colonies from any apprehension of attack by foreign Powers. But the Navy cannot undertake, and does not undertake, to protect our Indian dominions from internal disturbances, or to protect India, Canada, and our West African possessions, all of which have long land frontiers, from the possibility of attack by foreign Powers. The Navy cannot secure, and does not profess to be able to secure, immunity from attack to our naval bases in all parts of the world, upon which the efficiency of the Navy itself depends; and, further, whatever protection the Navy may be able to accord to these islands and to our colonies against invasion, we may at some time be engaged in a war with a Power which is as invulnerable to our Fleet as we hope we are invulnerable to its Army; and such a war could only be brought by us to a successful conclusion by being able to strike at the critical moment a blow of a decisive character. For these reasons it has always been held, and is held now by all authorities, military and naval, that no amount of naval strength and no amount of security which may be derived from our Auxiliary Forces at home can relieve us from maintaining considerable military establishments for immediate service abroad in emergencies.

The question, then, is. Are the establishments for which we provide excessive or not? I would ask the House to remember that the scale of these establishments is based on two factors, neither of which has been referred to in this debate. The first factor is the strength of the standing Army which we are compelled to maintain in India and the colonies for the defence of our naval bases. That is a factor which is permanent, and which is unalterable—at least to any great extent. The standing Army which we are thus bound to maintain permanently for the protection of our Empire, and which is now larger than at ordinary times in consequence of the necessity of a larger garrison in South Africa, amounts at present to 138,000 men. Again, a large part of that Army has to be maintained in tropical climates, where it is impossible that the service of our soldiers can be a very long one; that is a fact which cannot be eliminated from the consideration of the question. The second factor is that the whole foundation of our military system—the method by which our troops are raised, by which they are organised—the whole basis of our military system is the scheme which was established by Mr. Cardwell, the principal and main object of which scheme was the provision of adequate drafts to keep that standing Army abroad, of which I have spoken, permanently up to its full strength and in a condition of full efficiency. I know that Mr. Cardwell's scheme had other objects, objects which in Egypt and the Soudan, and, I will also say, in the late war, it has not unsuccessfully accomplished; but the main object with which the scheme was devised and recommended to Parliament was to provide in the most efficient manner for the maintenance of a great compulsory and obligatory standing Army abroad. Of course, if we consider that the scheme established by Mr. Cardwell is no longer suited to the altered conditions of our Empire, it is capable of modification. But I think we will pause a very long time before, on the advice of utterly and entirely irresponsible advisers, we discard a scheme which undoubtedly has up to the present stood us in good stead, and adopt another, until we are satisfied that it is recommended to us by those upon whose military judgment and knowledge we can rely. Our scheme of Army Corps has nothing to do with the real question raised by this Motion. That scheme, as has been explained over and over again, was intended to provide, and I think it does provide, a better system of organisation for the troops which we maintain at home; it has nothing whatever to do with the number and the scale of the establishment of those troops, which are based, as I have pointed out, on the requirements of Mr. Cardwell's scheme. Certain advantages are claimed, and I think rightly claimed, for the Army Corps organisation, but that organisation does not involve either an increase or a diminution of the numbers of the establishment, which are based on altogether different factors. If I had time I would lay before your Lordships a few figures showing what is the actual establishment of troops in this country and how far they are absolutely required or in excess of the requirements contemplated by Mr. Cardwell's scheme, but at this hour, and in the present state of the House, I will not venture to trouble your Lordships with any statistics of this kind. I come to the question which has been asked over and over again in the course of this discussion. How can we need in any possible circumstance an Army of 120,000 men to send abroad? I am bound to say that I do not understand the frame of mind of those who, after our experiences of the last three years, can ask such a question. What would have been thought two years ago of the judgment and capacity of the statesman who had said in the preceding year that he could not conceive the circumstances in which we should ever want three Army Corps of 120,000 men to send out of the country, when at a very short period afterwards we had to send to South Africa a force nearer to six than to three Army Corps. We are asked to say where we contemplate using these troops. If I could be told what our next war would be I might be able to say where we contemplate using these three Army Corps. Will any noble Lord or anyone venture to say that in an Empire of our extent, covering so large an area of the globe and with interests so varied and enormous, circumstances may not arise which may make it in the highest degree desirable and necessary to the protection of our vital interests to have the means of sending for service out of the country a force of the moderate number of 120,000 men?

One noble Lord, I think it was Lord Camperdown, said to-night that we were permanently placing ourselves in the rank of a great military nation. I wonder what France or Germany would say if they were told that their capacity as a great military nation was limited to the sending of three Army Corps of 120,000 men out of the country. It seems to me absolutely conclusive that the power to provide such a force in an emergency is essential to the best and the highest interests of the nation. It is conceivable that for the purposes of home defence we may be able to rely more than we have hitherto done upon a better organised body of Auxiliary forces. It is also conceivable that under some other military system we may be able to provide a more effective Army than has been provided under Mr. Cardwell's scheme. But until that time comes we are bound to ask Parliament to grant us the military establishments which are necessary to make our existing Army an efficient Army. We are not dealing now with the problems of the future. We have not had time since the war to elaborate a totally new Army system which would replace that which we are used to. When the time comes it is possible we may discover a system which may be worked with fewer men than are required at present. What we have to do is to provide for the wants of the present under our existing system; and until we have found some better system we must not grudge the establishments which in our judgment are necessary to secure the safety, and not only the safety, but also the honour and the interests, of the Empire.

On Question, Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Nine o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 27th March, 1903.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

MESSAGE TO ATTEND THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS.

The House went; and being returned—

Mr. SPEAKER reported the Royal Assent to—

1. Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Act, 1903.
2. Bank Holiday (Ireland) Act, 1903.
3. Light Locomotives (Ireland) Act, 1903.

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS.

The Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of Ways and Means.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

LAND DRAINAGE PROVISIONAL ORDER.

Bill to confirm a Provisional Order under The Land Drainage Act, 1861, relating to lands in the parishes of Aslackby and Dowsby, in the county of Lincoln, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Hanbury and Mr. Hayes Fisher.

LAND DRAINAGE PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

"To confirm a Provisional Order under The Land Drainage Act, 1861, relating to lands in the parishes of Aslackby and Dowsby, in the county of Lincoln," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 125.]

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP A).

Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher reported from the Committee on Group A of Private Bills; That the parties promoting the Walker and Wallsend Union Gas Bill had stated that the evidence of Thomas Messer Sturgess, Clerk to the Walker Urban District Council, was essential to their case, and, it having been proved that his attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House, he had been instructed to move that the said Thomas Messer Sturgess, clerk to the Walker Urban District Council do attend the said Committee on Monday next, at Eleven of the Clock.

Ordered, That Thomas Messer Sturgess do attend the Committee on Group A of Private Bills on Monday next at Eleven of the Clock.

CORK HARBOUR BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP No. 1).

Mr. Kimber reported from the Committee on Group No. 1 of Railway Bills; That the parties opposing the North Eastern Railway Bill had stated that the evidence of E. B. Cargill, Fishing Vessel Owner, Billingsgate, Hull, was essential to their case; and, it having been proved that his attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House, he had been instructed to move that the said E. B. Cargill do attend the said Committee on Tuesday next, at half-past Eleven of the Clock.

Ordered, That E. B. Cargill do attend the Committee on Group No. 1 of Railway Bills on Tuesday next, at half-past Eleven of the Clock.

PETITIONS.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Petition from Southampton, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Eassie and Nevay; and Newtyle; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION IN THE METROPOLIS.

Petition from Battersea, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

LAND VALUES ASSESSMENT AND RATING BILL.

Petition from Battersea, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

Petitions against: from Goole; and Guisborough; to lie upon the Table.

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.

Petitions against establishment: from Inverness; Jedburgh; and Broughty Ferry; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Little Halingbury; and West Hendon;. to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.

Copy presented, of Annual Report of Proceedings under the Tithe Acts, Copyhold Act, 1894, Inclosure Acts, and other Acts for the year 1902, together with a summary of the powers and duties of the Board under these Statutes [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.

Copy presented, of Annual Reports of Proceedings under the Diseases of Animals Acts, the Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Acts, etc., for the year 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EMIGRATION (COLONIES).

Copy presented, of Report on the Emigrants' Information Office for the year ended 31st December, 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS (IRELAND).

Copy presented, of Return of Prices of Agricultural Products and Live Stock for the year 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1901.

Copy presented, of Summary Tables, Area, Houses, and Population [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIA (PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT).

Address for "Copy of a Despatch from the Government of India, dated the 26th day of September, 1901, and of the Reply of the Secretary of State in Council, dated the 8th day of November, 1901, on the subject of Memorials from the officers of the Public Works Department appointed from the Royal Indian Engineering College in the years 1873–1878."—(*Sir Seymour King.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Railway Repairs—Danger to Public.

MR. BELL (Derby): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the arrest of a flagman on the Great Western Railway at Frome on the 5th February last on a charge of picking up coal from a passing train, with the result that the bridge undergoing repairs which he was protecting at the time was left unprotected for three hours; and whether, in the interests of the safety of the travelling public and the railwaymen, he will take steps to prevent repetitions of such occurrences.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas.*) I called for a report from the chief constable of Somersetshire on this case and am informed by him that the arrest was effected after communication with the stationmaster, and it does not appear that the man was wanted at the bridge at the time as no train was timed to pass there until seven hours later. No action on my part seems necessary.

Clerks to Surveyors of Taxes.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, in view of the petition of the clerks to the surveyors of taxes, of April, 1900, presented by the Board of Inland Revenue to the Treasury, the Treasury are prepared to establish these officials as permanent officers of the Crown.

(*Answered by Mr. Hayes Fisher.*) The Treasury are not prepared to establish these officials as permanent officers of the Crown with pensionable rights.

Hinckley Guardians—Vaccination Officers.

SIR CHARLES M'LAREN (Leicestershire, Bosworth): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if his attention has been called to representations of the Hinckley Guardians as to the state of the law as to the control of vaccination officers; and whether he will take steps to prevent these officials engaging legal advisers without consultation with or the consent of the guardians.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) My attention has been called to representations made by the guardians on the subject. As regards the last part of the Question, I must point out that the duty of the vaccination officer to take proceedings in cases of default is quite independent of any directions from the guardians. In cases where the guardians are opposed to the enforcement of the Vaccination Acts it would obviously be impossible for the vaccination officer to carry out the duty referred to if he had to obtain the consent of the guardians to the legal assistance which was requisite for the purpose; and I am advised that it is a necessary incident of the statutory duty of the vaccination officer that he should have authority to engage legal assistance where this is required.

Sale of Burghclere Poors Land.

MR. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.): To ask the hon. Member for the Tunbridge Division of Kent, as a Charity Commissioner, whether, seeing that, in the case of the Dunwich Town Lands some years ago, the Charity Commissioners held that the trustees could not sell the land by private negotiation to a single purchaser without first giving an opportunity to the public to purchase by tender or otherwise, the Commissioners will apply the same rule to the proposed sale by the trustees of the Burghclere Poors Land.

(*Answered by Mr. Griffith Boscawen.*) As has already been explained, in the case of the Burghclere Poors Land the trustees have a statutory power to sell without reference to the Commissioners and the Commissioners have accordingly no jurisdiction to direct the proceedings to be taken.

Vaccination Acts—Exemption Certificates.

MR. LEVY (Leicestershire, Loughborough): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been directed to the refusal of the justices of the Altrincham Petty Sessions on the 16th instant to grant a certificate of exemption under the Vaccination Act to an applicant who stated he had a conscientious objection to vaccination; and whether he can take any steps in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas.*) I have no information as to the case referred to. Certificates of exemption are, by law, to be granted when the justices are satisfied that the applicant has a conscientious objection; and the Secretary of State has no authority to intervene in the matter.

R.A.M.C.—Compulsory Vaccination of Civilian Clerks.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE (Bristol, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he is aware that an officer of the Royal Army Medical Staff requires civilian clerks in temporary employ on Royal Engineering Works to be vaccinated as a condition of employment; and will he say whether this action has received his sanction.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) Will the hon. Member kindly refer to a reply which I gave to a similar Question put yesterday by the hon. Member for the Rugby Division of Warwickshire.

China Medal for Tientsin Volunteers.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the Tientsin corps of Volunteers, who rendered efficient service in the defence of Tientsin during the military operations in North China in 1900, complain that the clasp which has, along with a medal, been given to the rest of His Majesty's forces concerned in those operations is being withheld from them, the medal alone being offered; and whether he will further consider the matter with a view to awarding due recognition to these Volunteers, whose spirit and conduct were of value at a critical time.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) The clasp has been already awarded in these cases.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to—

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act for codifying the Law relating to Marine Insurance." [Marine Insurance Bill (Lords).]

LAND VALUES ASSESSMENT AND RATING BILL.

[Second Reading.]

Order for Second Reading read.

DR. MACNAMARA (Camberwell, N.), in moving the Second Reading of the above-named Bill, said the Budgets of the last few years had been awaited with much curiosity and speculation, but, whatever surprise those Budgets might have contained, there was always one thing certain about the speeches in which they were introduced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that was that he would appeal for a broadened basis of Imperial taxation in order that he might be furnished with new revenues wherewith to meet the necessary charges on the public purse. Justifiable though that plea was with regard to the question of Imperial taxation, it was applicable with much greater force to the problem of local rating. In 1868 the amount raised by way of Imperial taxation in the United Kingdom was £63,700,000, in 1899–1900 the amount was

£109,63000, an increase of 72 per cent. As to local rates in England and Wales, the amount raised in 1868 was £16,500,000, and in 1899–1900 £40,750,000, an increase, not of 72 per cent., but of 150 per cent. Then, to take the case of London, the amount raised by way of local taxation in 1868 was £3,702,000, and in 1899–1900 £11,154,000, an increase not of 72 per cent., or even of 150 per cent., but of 200 per cent. Therefore the plea for redress in the incidence of local rating was much more urgent and powerful than in the case of Imperial taxation, and the problem was bound rapidly to become more acute. The burden of local rating on the working, shopkeeping, lower middle and professional classes was becoming too grievous to be borne, and as the standard of comfort and civilisation was raised, a larger expenditure in local government would havé to be contemplated. Apart from that, the Government last year passed a Bill which, in its immediate effect, would increase, by not less than £2,000,000, the aggregate amount of money to be raised by way of local rating.

While not professing to be a scientific economist, he had, after watching this matter with close interest for a considerable number of years, come to the definite conclusion that in great towns, and especially in London, there existed between rate expenditures and land values a direct relationship, viz., that of cause and effect. If the people of a city opened a park, widened a street, built an embankment, laid an electric railway, or constructed a bridge over, or a tunnel under a river, out of the rates, the value of adjoining land was enormously enhanced. To put his case in a sentence, the landowner was the residuary legatee of the great bulk of rate expenditure. Last year, in a debate similar to the present, the hon. and learned Member for the Stretford Division said there was no unearned increment. He had thought a great deal of that statement since, and he would put one case to the acute intellect of the hon. and learned Member. In 1865 a piece of land near the Temple Station, on the foreshore of the Thames, covered with coal sheds and wharfing, changed hands for £8,250. In 1869–70 the London ratepayers built the Embankment at enormous cost. In 1872 the London School Board desired to secure a piece of land on which to build its central offices. They obtained the very piece of land to which he had referred, and the jury awarded the owners the sum of £26,420. That appeared to him to represent an unearned increment of about £18,000. The ratepayers were first of all hit to build the embankment, and were hit again when they wanted to purchase land for a public office. He could multiply such instances, as also no doubt could every urban Member.

They were confronted in London with two rapidly moving phenomena in connection with this question. In or near the centre of the City leases were falling in, and ground rents had become three, four and five times larger than the entire rental of the whole tenement as they stood before the leases fell in. Mr. Gomme, the Clerk to the London County Council, wrote to him as follows:

> "It is not an unusual thing to find when leases expire in the central districts of London and new building leases are granted, that the ground rents obtained by the owners exceed in amount the total rental value of the business premises originally standing on the sites."

The other phenomenon with which they were confronted was that at the present moment, as the result of the general desire to go away from the centre of the city in order to live in the suburban zone, the value of those sites was increasing fabulously at the present time. Take an estate in Wandsworth with which he was familiar. This estate stood near the Common, and contained an area of about twenty acres. About ten years ago it was occupied as a residence, and the whole thing had been assessed at £650. The house had been pulled down and the estate let out in building leases, and what was the result? They had now crowded on that property ground rents to the value of £3,500 per annum. That was an instance which he could multiply indefinitely. As chairman of the School Accommodation Committee for the School Board of London he had had to go into the question of buying sites for board schools. In 1895 they went down to Cavendish Road, Balham, and bought a large piece of land containing 87,120 square feet, at 9d. per square foot. Six years after they wanted another site close to this one, upon which to erect another board school, and they bought 90,660 square feet of land close by the other site, but they had to pay 1s. 6¼d. per square foot. That was they were charged more than double the amount six years later compared with what they had to pay in 1895. He had spent a certain amount of time studying the posters issued by land agents announcing sales of land. He found that the auctioneers in setting forth the advantages of certain sites put into their prospectuses either prospective or actual public improvements which were going to increase the value of the land. He had read with great care the *Estates Gazette* and the *Land Agents' Record* and similar journals, and there he found innumerable cases of prospective improvements given as a reason why a larger price should be secured for some particular land. There was a case at Wimbledon where the fact that electric trams were about to be constructed within 100 yards of an estate was given as a reason for improving the value of the land. This meant that the people having spent their money on trams would directly increase the value of that particular estate. In another instance, at Bridgwater, a reason given was that the Borough Council contemplated the formation of a new street which, if carried out, would give an important frontage to this particular property. He knew of a plot of land in Battersea where a factory or warehouse might be built. In the advertisement offering this land for sale it was stated that the land was almost opposite the Battersea Borough Council's Electric Lighting Station, from which power could be economically supplied. Therefore the landowner was the residuary legatee of the great bulk of this expenditure.

They did not propose to touch agricultural land at all; they confined themselves to the land in London, and they said that all urban land must be assessed whether occupied or not under the scheme set out in this Bill. That was compulsory. Having assessed the land the overseers would place the assessment in a separate column; having done that, then they might lay a land rate on the capital value of the land of not more than one penny in the pound. Who was to pay this new rate? They declined to interfere with existing contracts, and they said that for the moment in the case of all existing contracts, the new rate must be paid by the new occupying tenants. After the date of the passing of this Act, in the cases of all new contracts the occupying tenant would make a rent reduction on account of the land rate laid upon him. Hon. Members would recognise that they had based this scheme upon the Minority Report of the Commission on Local Taxation. The majority of the Commissioners, he was aware, were against him. The Majority Report was signed by Earl Cawdor, Sir J. T. Hibbert, the hon. Member for the Hallam division of Sheffield, the hon. Member for the Stretford division, Mr. C. N. Dalton, Mr. Harcourt E. Clare, Mr. J. H. Elliott, Mr. E. Orford Smith and the hon. Member for the Ripon Division. There was, however, a very remarkable Minority Report to which he particularly desired to call attention. It was signed in the first place by the Chairman of the Commission, who was a member of the Cabinet, Lord Balfour of Burleigh. It was also signed by Lord Blair Balfour (Lord Justice-General of Scotland), Sir Edward Hamilton (Assistant Secretary to the Treasury), Sir George Murray (Secretary to the Postmaster-General) and Professor Stuart. There was also a most powerful Report by His Honour Judge O'Connor, who also went the whole length of the Minority Report. He wished to give one or two brief extracts from this Minority Report. They said—

"That site and structure, which are now combined for rating purposes, differ so essentially in character that they ought to be separately valued."

"That when separated from structure, site is capable of bearing somewhat heavier taxation, and should be made to bear it, subject, however, to strict respect for existing contracts."

"That the differential treatment should take the form of a special site value rate, payable in part by means of a deduction from rent on the Income Tax method, and that thus a part of the burden should visibly fall on those who have interests superior to those of the occupier."

"That subject to the conditions which we have specified, the special site value should be

> charged in respect of unoccupied property and uncovered land."

There was another quotation which he would give, because it touched the heart of an appalling social problem which they could not tackle until they had dealt with the land question, and that was the question of the housing of the working classes. It was because he was interested in that question that he had asked the House to pass the Second Reading of this Bill. They said—

> "While the rating of site value thus concerns the public as an administrative reform, it is of special importance in connection with the urgent problem of providing house accommodation for the working-classes. Anything which aggravates the appalling evil of overcrowding does not need to be condemned, and it seems clear to us that the present heavy rates on building do tend to aggravate those evils, and that rating of site values would help to mitigate them. If more of the burden were thrown on sites, the portion left to be borne by building would be diminished, and this would weigh with the builder who is hesitating to embark on the erection of new structures."

He could not add another word to such a convincing comment as that. It was said that it was not practicable to assess land separately. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford in 1890 said that it would cost between £3,000,000 and £6,000,000 to do what was proposed, and that it would be ruinous, and the hon. Member for Tunbridge Wells said it would be impracticable and costly. What did the Minority Report say? They said—

> "A valuation sufficiently accurate for the purpose and not inferior to the present valuation, could be made without undue labour and expense."

Then there was the following remarkable comment by Judge O'Connor—

> "Many witnesses who appeared before the Committee dwelt with emphasis on the alleged or suggested difficulty of estimating the value of land apart from buildings upon it; but no one of the expert witnesses would say that it was impossible, and none would admit that he could not himself do it if it was necessary. But, in fact, the matter is past the stage of mere argument, for not only is the thing being done every day for private purposes, but it is also done on public account in all three countries under the established practice. The entire system of valuation in Ireland under Acts of Parliament is based upon the separation valuation of land and of buildings. In England land has to be separately valued in the country for the purposes of the Agricultural Rates Act. Under numberless private Acts of Parliament the thing has been done for many years in connection with compensation to owners, lessees, and occupiers disturbed in their 'quiet enjoyment' by promoters. In the case of the Tower Bridge Southern Approach Act, 1895, not only was the valuation differentiated, but the principle was recognised and applied."

Then it was actually objected that they did not propose to break existing contracts. It was pointed out by the hon. and learned Member for the Stretford Division that this would involve a new burden on the occupying tenant. He remembered with what horror the hon. and learned Member raised his hands at the suggestion last year. He said that they should go direct to the ground landlord, but the hon. and learned Gentleman knew better than he himself did that that was impracticable. The minority of the Commission reported that it was "neither workable nor equitable." It did seem to him that the Minority Report hit upon the best way out of the difficulty of the case. Let him examine the most serious charge brought against them, that they were proposing something very detrimental to the occupying tenant. It was said that they were imposing a new rate on occupying tenants. First of all he would suggest that the rating of unoccupied land would bring such a sum of money into the local purse with such a rebating influence that the occupying tenants would pay with the two rates together no more, and probably less, than the single rate they were paying now. He might be wrong there, but in any case his second answer was that for the great bulk of the people,. for whom he was concerned—the working classes who felt the burden of rates so grievously before they knew where they were, their tenancies being so short, they would fall under the rent deductions which would come into active operation. And if they did not get relief by the rebating influence of the rating of unoccupied land, before the new burden—if there was a burden, and he challenged that—fell upon them, they would be universally applying the second part of the system which applied to new tenancies.

The next objection was that they were saddling the landowner with this new rate, and that he would take it out of the occupying tenant. It was said that he would increase rents. If that was true, he was lost in wonder at the objection to this proposal from the point of view of the landowner's friends. If that was true, let him take it out if he could. He would take all he could get, no doubt, like most of them. But the rating of unoccupied land would have such an effect upon building operations that he did not think the landowner would be able to get quite as much as he did now, where a large amount of land was held up and kept out of the market in order to enhance its value. He would suggest to hon. Members opposite that they should choose the horse on which they were going to win. They should choose whether it was to be the tenant or the landlord. When they came forward with a number of arguments on behalf of the tenant, and a number of arguments on behalf of the landlord, which were mutually self-destructive, he would respectfully suggest that they should stick to the one or to the other. They could not have it both ways. He was very much amused that morning in reading a memorandum issued by the Property Protection Society. There he found the same conflict of argument. They began by protesting against the bad effect which this Bill would have on property. They said it would enormously depreciate the value of freehold property. That was an understandable argument. Having said that, and laid it down as their first line of defence, they said,—

> "The Bill would seriously diminish the existing check upon extravagant expenditure on the part of local authorities, who, at present, are restrained by the knowledge that the cost of any increase in expenditure comes immediately out of the pockets of the general body of their constituents."

He thought that landowners were constituents as well as tenants. There were some that he knew who were constituents three or five times over. They were told, in the next place, by the hon. Member for Tunbridge Wells, and the hon. and learned Member for the Stretford Division, that this was not a question to be dealt with in a piecemeal way—that it was an important and far-reaching question of local taxation. That would apply very admirably to the case of the Agricultural Rating Act, or to the case of the Clerical Tithes Acts. His memory failed him as to whether the hon. Members raised it on those occasions. He rather thought that they did not. Then they were told that this Bill as it stood was not comprehensive enough. Now, that was a singular charge for Conservatives to bring against Radicals. Since he had been in the House he had learned to respect one excellent Conservative doctrine: "Drastic remedies often create greater evils than those you seek to remove." It was a little hard when they were endeavouring to apply such an unexceptionable doctrine that they should be reproved by those from whom they learned it. What was the Government's position in regard to this matter of the taxation of land values? At the General Election of 1895, the Unionist Party undoubtedly looked upon this as a matter calling for legislation. He remembered a debate on a similar subject on the 1st of May, 1900, in this House, when the hon. Member for North Islington made this statement—

> "He had with him a book issued at the Conservative Party's headquarters on the eve of the General Election. That book commended the Report of the present First Lord of the Admiralty's Committee, and suggested as possibly desirable that the ground landlords should contribute directly to the rates. On the strength of such authority he had made certain promises to his constituents."

The Conservative Party at their headquarters were in favour, according to that statement, of the Report of the Committee presided over by the then First Lord of the Admiralty. He wondered if they had any idea of what they were committing themselves to. He would repeat one sentence from the Report of Lord Goschen's Committee of 1870. The Report was a most uncompromising document in favour of the rating of land values. Going through the matter in great detail, the Report gave statistics which were of the most admirable character. They showed how land, year after year, had borne less and less of the entire rating, and how the rating of houses had gone up, and up, to the amount they now bore. That was conspicuously set forth in this Report, which said—

> "It has been conclusively proved that a great proportion of the rates, especially in towns, does not fall upon the owner, but is paid by the occupier."

On that the Committee suggested the rating of land values, and their suggestion was entirely homologated by the Conservative headquarters in 1895. In 1896, after the General Election, the Government appointed a Royal Commission. In 1899 the late Mr. E. J. C. Morton, the Member for Devonport, moved an Amendment to the Address on the question of land values, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division, who was in charge of the Government opposition to the Bill, said—

> "For the hon. Member to come down to the House on an afternoon like this,"

—he confessed that he forgot what was the matter with the afternoon—

> "and move a Vote of Censure on the Government because they had not put into the Queen's Speech a matter which was being dealt with by a Royal Commission, was one of the wildest propositions he had ever heard."

Well, of course, that killed it at once. In 1900 the hon. Member for the Pontefract Division moved a Resolution referring to the taxation of urban land values, and on that occasion it was ill-timed, according to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford. It was said to be "academic," and that they must wait once more for the Report of the Royal Commission. They had done what Lord Goschen told them to do. Lord Goschen told them not to bring forward general Motions, but to bring forward a specific Bill, and that the Government would give it due and proper attention. The hon. Member for Thirsk, as representative of the Local Government Board, spoke in the debate on behalf of the Government on what was practically a similar question last year. He said—

> "If the Bill was as sound in principle as it was unsound, he would still say that it was not a suitable Bill to give a Second Reading to."

That was a very good beginning. The hon. Member continued—

> "The question of rating was too important to be dealt with as a plaything in a Private Member's Bill on a Wednesday afternoon."

He could assure the hon. Member in all sincerity that this was not a plaything to them. It had been a matter of labour, and of some care and industry. In this connection he might paraphrase a saying of Lord Beaconsfield, and state, "If you want to know anything of a subject, bring in a Bill about it." The hon. Member for Thirsk also stated that—

> "The Bill did not go near touching the crux of the problem of local taxation, which was: How could local burdens be better distributed according to the ability to bear them? If the question was to be touched, it ought to be touched by the Government, and the Government would deal with it."

That was a year ago. The hon. Member also said:—

> "He was not at liberty to say how the Government would deal with it."

He asked this House to decline to wait to see how the Government would deal with it. While the Government procrastinated the ratepayers starved. Was it that we were to take a place behind Continental countries and our own Colonies in this matter? There were seventy-six towns and counties in Germany where already this system was in full vogue. Paris was already engaged on a separate assessment of urban land values. Five out of seven of the Australian Colonies had the system in effect. New Zealand had had a general land tax of one penny in the pound since 1891, and had, since 1896, a Local Option Act permitting municipalities to levy a rate on unimproved land values. Sixty-two localities had already adopted that local option scheme in New Zealand, and Mr. Seddon, the Prime Minister, had lately said on behalf of his Government that they intended to universalise the scheme. He had sent this Bill to a great many municipalities and had received a great many resolutions in its favour. He would read the names of a few of them. The Parliamentary Committee of the London County Council were in favour of the principle of the Bill, and were to have reported upon it last Tuesday, but that business was not reached, and it would probably be discussed next Tuesday. He had, however, not the shadow of a doubt that approval of the Bill would be carried. The Bill had been approved of by the

Borough Councils of Camberwell, Hampstead, Battersea, Fulham, Deptford, the Town Council of Bradford, the Parliamentary Committee of the Town Council of Cardiff, the Town Council and Guardians of Blackburn Union, Dewsbury, Darwen Union, the Town Councils of Burnley and Torquay, the Finance Committee of the Town Council of Eastbourne, the Town Councils of Clitheroe, Loughborough, Newport in Monmouthshire, Northampton, Newton, Longton, the Borough of Bootle, and Hastings. He had had one letter out of all which was against the scheme and that came from the Metropolitan Borough of Stoke Newington, but why they were against it they did not say. He began his investigations on this subject by studying with great care the speeches of one of the most distinguished Members of the House of Commons. When he wanted information on questions of political reform he always went to these. He referred to the right hon. Gentleman the Colonial Secretary, and he based his plea for this modest little scheme upon a deliverance from the lips of the right hon. the Colonial Secretary, who said:—

> "I would ask again why should owners of ground rents escape all contribution to the expenditure of their localities? These ground rents have all grown out of the prosperity and industry of the community. The property of the owners has been improved by local expenditure, and why should not the owners contribute towards the local expenditure of which they ought to bear a part?"

He could not add a syllable to that deliverance, and with these sentiments on his lips he begged to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

*Mr. GRIFFITH BOSCAWEN (Kent, Tunbridge) said that the hon. Member in the course of his very interesting speech had told them that his object was to do something to relieve the burdens of existing ratepayers; and that the rates had gone up something like 200 per cent. With that he was in cordial agreement with the hon. Member. And then the hon. Gentleman went on to say that there had been an enormous increase in the value of urban sites. He did not deny that there had been an enormous increase in the value of urban sites, but when the hon. Member told the House that that increase was principally due to the expenditure of the rates, he took issue with him. His argument was that it was not the expenditure of the rates which, as a rule, had increased the value of urban sites; it was the advantage of the site and the presence of the community. That was not the same thing, for the expenditure of the rates in many cases, so far from increasing, had diminished values. Very often when a man took a house the first question he asked was "What are the rates?" and if the rates were high he would give less rent for it than if they were low. The hon. Member must be aware that certain public expenditure, while it improved one part of the town, operated in exactly the opposite direction in another part of the town; that there was a worsement as well as a betterment, and if the hon. Member was going to tax owners of property for the expenditure which had improved their property, was he going to compensate those owners whose property had been worsened? If they were going to put an extra rate on simply in consequence of betterment, they ought to differentiate the rate paid by the man whose property was diminished in value and make it smaller.

DR. MACNAMARA: His assessment would be lower.

*Mr. GRIFFITH BOSCAWEN: The Assessment would be lower! But were they going to put this additional rate on capi al value all over the urban district and then say to owners of certain property that they would get the benefit of a lower Assessment? He had been amused at the example given by the hon. Member of property being improved by expenditure by public bodies. What did he tell them? That the town or borough council spent money on electric tramways, and therefore that the charge which had been incurred by the borough or town council ought to be borne by the property which had been benefited. Well, but he thought that electric tramways and other forms of municipal trade were no charge on the rates. At least, that was what hon. Gentlemen opposite told them: that they were in fact a relief to the rates. What followed? They were going to relieve the rates, but the owner whose property was benefited by the relief of the rates was not to have any advantage of the benefit because he was not a direct payer of the rates. He sympathised entirely with the object of the hon. Member if he could do anything to relieve the burden that pressed so hardly on existing ratepayers, but this Bill, so far from diminishing the burden on the existing ratepayers, would actually increase it; and so far from its promoters having found a great undeveloped source of wealth, never before tapped, they were simply sinking a shaft into an old mine, and putting fresh burdens on those who, at the present moment, were already overburdened. The Bill put an additional tax on the capital value of the sites to be paid for by the occupier. The hon. Member pointed to the fact that he did not propose to break contracts. Very well, but how was he going to benefit the present occupiers, the present ratepayers? The hon. Member dismissed that matter in an airy way, by saying "We put the tax on the occupier only for the moment." But there were leases for 999 years, and in the course of that very long period the "present ratepayers" were going to bear the burden of this extra rate. In fact, the Bill was precisely the same Bill which was rejected by the House last year, with one or two minor alterations. It got rid of the Schedule of the so-called permanent improvements to which this new site value rate was to be applied, but substantially the Bill was the same as that which was rejected last year. On that occasion the hon. Member for Launceston, who was perhaps the most learned and expert advocate of rating ground values in the House, condemned the proposals in the Bill. After referring to the fact that it was a source of satisfaction to him that a Bill on the subject had been brought in, the hon. and learned Member said—

> "I am bound to say that there is another side to it; and that is that the minority [of the Royal Commission] in their practical recommendations abandon those principles and propose a plan which I think I shall show to the House is not only diametrically opposed to the opinions they accepted but which is one which will do great injustice to existing occupiers."

Mr. Griffith Boscawen.

And yet the hon. Member came forward with practically the same proposal of a new rate on the capital value of the site to be paid by the existing ratepayers!

He passed from that point to the argument that the owner of the ground values paid us rates. But what happened when a man let his land on building lease? The builder, knowing what he was likely to get for the house when built, in a particular locality, in the way of rent, agreed with the owner to pay so much ground rent, and he took into consideration that he would have to pay all the rates, including those on the ground rent, and therefore offered the owner of the land so much less. The hon. Member might say that the builder did not anticipate that the rates would be so high; he quite agreed, but the owner did not anticipate that there would be this large increase in value of his property. And who benefited by this increase in value? The lessee entirely, and very often the speculative builder could sell his building lease for a very large sum. No doubt the speculative builder, who was not a philanthropist, made a very shrewd guess of what were likely to be the rates before he fixed the ground rent; and therefore, he contended, so far from this rate being a new source of untaxed rent, it had been paid all along. He would quote a few opinions on that point. Sir Robert Giffen, in his memorandum submitted to the Royal Commission, said—

> "The idea of the separate rating of ground values arises from a misunderstanding of the real incidence of rates. As that burden falls *ab initio* on the ground landlord, diminishing the sum of capital or income he is able to obtain for his property, there is really no separate ground value to be assessed."

Very well, if that were so, where was this new and undeveloped source of wealth which had never yet been tapped? Take, again, an authority who had been recognised—the Secretary of the Cobden Club, Mr. Harold Cox. In his book on "Land Nationalisation," speaking of the very proposals in this Bill, Mr. Cox wrote—

> "These three suggestions—the division of rates between occupier and owner, the taxation of ground values and the rating of vacant sites—are the proposals most frequently made for amending the present system of local taxation. As we have seen, they will none of them bear the test of criticism; and this was to be expected, for they are all tainted in their origin by the false theory that rates fall upon the occupier, and are all prompted by the paradoxical desire to make the owner pay what he already does pay."

What were the undeveloped sources of wealth which the hon. Gentleman thought he was going to tap for the benefit of existing ratepayers? On that point he would refer to the minority Report of the Royal Commission, because somehow or other, it was the practice of hon. Gentlemen opposite, not only on this question, but also on the licensing question, to accept minority Reports as gospel truth, and to argue from them. The minority Report which was signed by Lord Balfour of Burleigh and others did not hold out the prospect of large new sources of wealth. It said that the proposed tax—

> "Would, or at least should, conduce to the removal of some of the widely-spread misconceptions which seemed to prevail, not only in political circles, but among economic authorities and responsible statesmen; for while it would be admitted that there were defects in the urban rating system, and an attempt to remedy those defects, it would show that this is no large developed source of taxation available for local purposes and still less for national purposes.

Therefore, taking the very authority on whose recommendation the Bill was founded, the large source of taxation and of wealth which hon. Gentlemen opposite thought was untaxed, was not going to provide any great relief for the existing taxpayer; and was only recommended in order to dissipate a misconception which appeared to prevail, he would not say with the hon. Gentleman, but at all events with some of his friends.

He wished the hon. Member to consider what would really be the effect of his proposal. When existing leases fell in, what would happen? Then, according to the hon. Gentleman, they would get at the rich and bloated owner of land values; and they would tax the noble Duke or the noble Marquess who owned large blocks of property in London, and who, according to the hon. Gentleman's contention, was deriving a large and increasing income on which he was paying no rates. But the hon. Gentleman should remember that ground rents had now become the subject of investment by the poor hard-working man, by the widow, and by the small Government or City clerk, who all invested in them because of the safe income, and for that reason were content with the very low rate of interest which attached to them. Now it was proposed to impose fresh taxation on these incomes, which would very largely diminish their value; but not only would these people be taxed, but great charitable and educational endowments would also be taxed. Mr. Matthews, one of the witnesses before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Town Holdings, gave as an instance the case of King Edward's School at Birmingham. He said—

> "Our income from ground rents is £27,000 a year. Supposing the £27,000 is rated (the rates in Birmingham are 6s. 8d. in the £) we should lose £9,000 a year, or one-third of £27,000. That, at twenty-five years purchase, would be £225,000. If our ground rents were to be rated, a portion of the school property equivalent to nearly a quarter of a million would be confiscated at one stroke."

That was the sort of proposal which the hon. Gentleman contemplated with equanimity.

What was really wanted was to tax personal property for local purposes. The right hon. Gentleman said, quite frankly, that the Bill merely put a tax on real property; and he was rather sarcastic because hon. Members objected to an isolated proposition. But why they objected to an isolated proposition was that even the Minority Report, on which the Bill was based, only recommended it as part of a comprehensive scheme of rating reform, in which personal property would be brought in. He was quite prepared to admit that one part of the Bill, if given effect to, would find a new source of revenue—namely, the taxation of vacant land; but he was bound to say that that seemed to him to be the most extraordinary proposition he had ever heard. Take a concrete case. There was a certain amount of land in the immediate vicinity of a town paying, for instance, an agricultural rent of £2 an acre, and rates amounting to 10s. Under this Bill, it might be said that part of this land was building land. Many urban districts went very far into the country, and there must be a point at which building land ceased. The Bill would draw an arbitrary line, and say that all within the line was building land. Then the capital value of the land would be fixed at, for instance, £100 an acre, and 1d. in the £1 would have to be paid on that fictitious capital in respect of rates on the site value. In other words, for that land nearly £5 would be paid in rates, or nearly £3 10s. more than the rent received. He ventured to say that that was an unfair and absurd proposition. What was the reason given for it? They were told that it was because bloated landowners would not allow building. He challenged any hon. Member opposite to give one authentic instance where that had occurred. He had heard of many instances, but they had never borne the test of examination; and Sir E. Hamilton, in the Minority Report, distinctly said that there was not a single authentic instance. The Report further said that it was very unlikely to occur, at all events for a long period. Naturally a landowner receiving £2 an acre for his land, would only be too glad to sell it for £500, or £1,000 an acre. If land was held up there was a far better remedy than this unfair tax. The best remedy by far would be to give the local authorities power to buy and build for themselves.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): No, no. That is municipal trading.

*MR. GRIFFITH BOSCAWEN said he was certainly in favour of that amount of municipal trading in preference to the plan suggested by hon. Gentlemen opposite. Passing from that to the case of vacant land, did the hon. Gentleman seriously suggest that the rates benefited vacant land? That could not be contended for a moment, and as soon as ever the land was built on and the rates did benefit it, then the owner of the land bore his share of those rates. This was a very important question, and it had been brought forward in a very lucid and temperate speech by the hon. Member. It had been brought forward in order to give some relief to the taxpayer, and to give some ease in the matter of overcrowding. He was equally sincere in agreeing with those objects, but he doubted whether they could be accomplished in this manner. To sum up the position, he would only say that this Bill, so far as it went, only added to the burdens of the existing ratepayers on all land values, because they were taxed already; and, so far as vacant land went, it was obviously unfair to put a tax on that, because it was putting a tax on capital unrealised. For these reasons he moved that this Bill be read a second time this day six months.

MR. M. WHITE RIDLEY (Stalybridge) said the hon. Member who moved the Second Reading of this Bill had two objects in view—first, to tap new sources of revenue, and second, to diminish the existing burdens on building enterprise. Every Member of this House could sympathise with those objects, but he thought that they would not be attained by this Bill. How did the hon. Member propose to tap a new source of revenue in relief of the taxpayer, when it was already taxed sufficiently heavily? He proposed to get relief of rates by taxing twice over. If this Bill proposed to alter the whole system of rating, then there might be something to be said for separating land values from other property for the purpose of taxation, but under this Bill the hon. Member proposed to tax land values and leave the old system of land rating untouched. The hon. Member had brought forward some striking cases as to the increased value of land, and those cases might be multiplied in every district in the country; but as the value of the land increased, so the assessment of that land also increased, and the land paid more rates in consequence. That was a matter which the hon. Member had appeared to have forgotten. Then the hon. Member proposed to diminish the existing burdens on building enterprise by taxing unoccupied houses. It did not seem to him that taxing unoccupied houses was likely to encourage building, and he did not see how taxing unoccupied land was going to bring real relief to the problem of housing the poor. The land was an essential portion of the house which was built upon it, and although separate taxes might be placed on the house and the land, they could not be separated one from the other, because bricks and mortar without the land would be worth nothing. This Bill, which was founded on the Minority Report of Lord Balfour of Burleigh's Committee, had a different object altogether to the objects of that Committee. The object of that Committee was to redistribute values, and although they thought no scheme, that they had considered, satisfactory, for political and sentimental reasons, it was better to redistribute values in appearance, if not in reality. If this Bill was founded on Lord Balfour of Burleigh's Report, then it ought to carry out the objects of that Committee, and if those were its objects, he contended that the Bill was premature and totally unnecessary. That Committee examined all the schemes submitted to it, and having examined them and found they were unsatisfactory, said it was better on sentimental grounds to redistribute values, but the Bill which the House rejected last year by a majority of seventy-one was a much better Bill than this, and he sincerely hoped that on this occasion that majority would be largely increased This Bill was inconsistent. It had already been pointed out that it introduced the novel principle of taxing unrealised capital, but the striking inconsistency, as he read the Bill, was that in Clause 5, Sec. b, it broke existing contracts by providing that where a house was divided into two, the rate was to be paid by the person who owned the whole house. It was not right to lay down a general principle unless that principle was carried to its logical conclusion. The general principle laid down by this Bill was that land was a separate source of revenue which did not pay enough rates under the present system of rating. With that principle he totally disagreed, and it was one that he hoped the House would not endorse. On these grounds he hoped the House would accept the Motion of his hon. friend and reject this Bill which, though dealing with excellent objects, would not, he felt sure, attain those objects, but would lay down general principles which would be most injurious, and would establish a lack of faith in landed property.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Mr. Griffith Boscawen.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Mr. SOARES (Devonshire, Barnstaple) said he was one of those who recognised the difficulties which lay at the bottom of a measure of this kind. To a very considerable extent he agreed with Lord Rosebery when he said that so far he had not seen a Bill to which he could give his whole-hearted approval; but that should not prevent the House endeavouring to find a satisfactory solution to this problem. He believed that if this Bill which was now before the House was read a second time to-day, that after it had gone through the Committee Stage, and certain alterations had been made in it, it would be a Bill which would be acceptable, not only to Lord Rosebery, but to the whole of the Liberal Party. This question had made considerable advance during the past few years. People were beginning to understand it, and what was meant by it, and the Report of the Royal Commission had helped considerably in that direction. It was true that the Report did not lead them to any very drastic conclusions, it did not take them very far in the direction which they wished to go, but it assisted them materially in one respect, and that was with regard to the doctrine of unearned increment. He contended that both the Majority Report and the Minority Report recognised the doctrine of unearned increment, and that was by far the most important part of the case, because that deduction was the foundation on which they applied for public support, and it was undoubtedly the ground on which they based the whole of this proposed legislation. The Majority Report, on page 44, admitted that the value of land might be enhanced by circumstances beyond the influence or control of its owner, and the Minority Report, on page 167, stated—

"There is, however, another feature about urban site value which appears to us to be almost if not quite peculiar to it, that is the increase of value by the expenditure of the public authority upon improvements."

Since the issue of the Report there had been additional testimony in the same direction. Another Daniel had come to judgment in the person of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University. Sir John Gorst, in the March number of the *Nineteenth Century*, in an article on Social Reform, had stated—

> "But owners of property had more interest financially than any other class in the prosperity of the people; a large share of prosperity means greater power of production, and the additional production finds its way into the landowners' pockets."

He quite agreed with all these statements, and held that the right hon. Gentleman had rightly diagnosed the situation. Nevertheless, he said that this state of affairs was undoubtedly wrong, because in the first place no member of the community should be allowed to arrogate to himself profits which are made by another portion of the community, and therefore rightly belonged to them, and in the second place because the attempt to obtain these improper profits leads to grave social evils, such as over-crowding, hindrance to the development of trade, and the extension of towns in unsuitable directions according to the caprices of landowners.

Now in dealing with a new legislative idea, and this course was a new legislative idea, it was important for one moment to consider the principles of the State with regard to the ownership of land. It was unnecessary for him to remind the House that in law no one was an absolute owner of land. The Crown was, of course, the ultimate owner of all land, and the holder of the freest and largest fee-simple in the country was only a tenant in the eyes of the law. Notwithstanding this fact, everyone recognises that land is private property, but it is property of a peculiar description. Land is a monopoly, but a monopoly of such a nature that the user of it is necessary to the existence of everyone of us. Therefore land is quite distinct from other kinds of property, and consequently the State has never hesitated when the rights of the community, and the rights of the landlords, came into conflict to declare that the rights of the landlords should go to the wall. For instance, no man is allowed to use his land in such a way as to permit it to become a nuisance to his neighbours. Then, too, in many towns there are restrictions put upon the right of a man to build what he may think fit on his own property. It is seen in many existing urban building by-laws. Then, too, in the country districts the State has gone so far as to interfere in the contracts between landlords and tenants—as in the Ground Game Act. Now, in all these cases the interests of the community have come first, and the interests of the landlord have come second, and if therefore it could be proved that the rating of site values was in the interests of the community, the case will have gone a long way towards being established.

Then, too, he was not sure that the principle for which they were now contending, namely, that a landlord was not entitled to take the profit of other people's work, had not already been admitted by the State. He thought it had been admitted with regard to agricultural lands, because in agricultural tenancies the landlord was obliged to pay the tenant, in some cases, compensation for improvements which had been made by the tenant. He thought, therefore, that it was this doctrine, *mutatis mutandis*, which they were now endeavouring to apply to urban land. There was another argument which he would like to place before the House, because he thought the strength of it had not been sufficiently considered. The argument he alluded to was the argument used in the Minority Report, when the signatories of the Minority Report stated that the rating of site values was advisable, both on the ground of sentiment and political expediency. In the course of the debate last year, over and over again it was said that politics and sentiment had nothing to do with this matter, and the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had again repeated this argument. It is said that this subject is a dry-as-dust subject, and should be settled by mutual arrangement between all parties. He did not agree with that statement. He thought that sentiment might in the future play a very large part indeed in the settlement of this question, and he considered that those gentlemen who had signed the Minority Report were not by any means talking shallow nonsense, but displayed a quite unusual intelligent anticipation of events.

He said that, if he were a Socialist, if he were a man who believed in the single tax, if he were in favour of confiscatory measures, then he would hope that this Bill would not pass into law. And why? Consider for one moment the present condition of matters. Remember that £100,000,000 are annually paid as rent. Remember that the landlords who receive this money, *quâ* landlords, "toil not, neither do they spin." Remember that taxation is steadily increasing; remember that much is being put on the shoulders of the working class, more and more by corn duties and sugar duties. Remember, also, that taxation is likely to increase in the future. Remember, too, that working men are becoming more and more educated, and more and more powerful every day. Consider the lessons of Woolwich [MINISTERIAL cries of "Chertsey"]. Yes, they had succeeded in holding a seat by a reduced majority in what was one of the greatest Conservative strongholds. Nevertheless, this Government would not always be in power, and sooner or later the great town landlords would be arraigned at the bar of the nation. What would they ask for in that day? They would ask for justice, for equity, and appeal for no confiscation. What would be the reply? It was possible in those days they might be reminded of the old equitable maxim, "He who comes to equity must come with clean hands." If when that day came it were proved that these town landlords had ground the faces of the poor; if it were proved that they were even the partial cause of the overcrowding which has proved such a curse to our large towns; if it were proved that they had taken profits not rightly theirs, then, perhaps, they might be dealt with more severely than was absolutely just, and would regret not accepting this mild and moderate measure, which would remove for ever the principal ground of agitation against them.

Having alluded to the general principles, he would like to say a few words with regard to the Bill, and more particularly with regard to some of the difficulties in connection with it. Perhaps one of the greatest difficulties was the question of the alteration of existing contracts. He admitted that the Majority Report, and the Minority Report, and Judge O'Connor had all spoken against the alteration of existing contracts, and he admitted also that this Bill did alter them in certain cases; but it must be remembered that there are precedents for the alteration of existing contracts. You had them in the Irish Land Acts; then in the Education Act of last session you had alterations in the most solemn form of contracts, contract and trust deeds under seal. Then, too, it must be remembered that by the law of this land contracts made in restraint of trade were looked upon as void, and he was not sure that many of these contracts between landlord and tenant were not morally, at all events, contracts in restraint of trade. Personally, he was not against the alteration of existing contracts. So far as he could see there was only one class which would suffer to any appreciable extent, namely, the purchasers of ground-rents. He admitted that this was a large class. He admitted that many people who were poor enough, at all events, to be excused the Income Tax, had invested their money in this security, and he also admitted that their securities were very little improved by public improvements. But he desired to point out one important fact in connection with this matter, namely, that this subject, the question of the taxation of ground values and ground-rents had been under discussion for years, many people had been frightened in regard to it, and consequently the class of purchasers of ground-rents had been reduced in number, hence there was not the same competition, and a great majority of people had purchased ground-rents for a much less amount than they were intrinsically worth. Then there was another difficulty. The difficulty in regard to occupiers. He admitted this difficulty, and admitted it was a flaw in the Bill, but he thought it could be put right in Committee. It would be necessary to divide the occupiers into three classes. The first class were the occupiers on weekly tenancy, and they would not be affected by the contents of this Bill, because in almost every instance their rates were compounded for. The second class were the class which he might describe as on short tenancy, namely, the occupiers on an annual tenancy, and on short leases, leases for five, seven or fourteen years. With regard to this class, he would advise that a similar course should be taken as is taken with regard to the Private Improvement Rate in Section 214 of the Public Health Act, 1875. That clause provides that if a tenant holds at a rack rent, he should be entitled to deduct three-fourths of the Private Improvement Rate from his rent. He would suggest that instead of taking three-fourths that the whole of the Site Value Rate should be deducted. Then the clause went on to say that if the landlord of this tenant held for a term of which less than twenty years was unexpired, and if he paid rent to his landlord he should be entitled to make a similiar deduction, and so on right up till you get to the original vendor. Then, with regard to the third class, the tenants who hold for twenty-one years or more, and without doubt this is a very large class of leaseholders, embracing as it does leases for twenty-one, sixty, ninety-nine and 999 years. He said that he would protect them by inserting a clause giving drastic powers of leasehold enfranchisement. In this way he considered the difficulties would be solved with regard to all the various classes of tenants, weekly, short tenancy, and long leaseholders, and they could then place the burden on the shoulders of those by whom it ought to be borne.

Then there was the difficulty with regard to valuation. The Majority Report quoted the evidence of a number of surveyors, and he would like to point out that there was one thing in common with all of them. They all said it could be done, but they were all extremely shy as to doing it. Not one of them considered he was incompetent. What was the reason of this? Why did we find this startling unanimity? The reason of this was because they made such valuations every day, or rather as often as they could be paid for it. Not only did they make these valuations, but they must notice that the law recognised the validity of them, and allowed people to act on them. A good many of the vacant sites in the large towns of this country, and in fact nearly all those vacant sites which are in the hands of speculators, are mortgaged, in many cases the first mortgage is held by trustees, and the law said that these trustees could be held indemnified for any loss, provided they had acted on the report of a valuer and had only advanced two-thirds of his valuation. Hence the law now recognised that these gentlemen were competent at the present time, and they take money for doing something which seemed when they were before the Royal Commission to send a cold thrill of nervousness down all their spines. But there is one serious matter in connection with these valuations which was not touched upon by the Bill, viz., the question of restrictive covenants. If this Bill became law as it now stands, it would be found that there was much land which looked like valuable building land, and from which it was expected that a site value rate would be obtained, which would be valued at almost nothing, because of the restrictive covenants upon it. For instance, he knew of a plot of land of nine acres in an urban district which was absolutely suitable for building cottages or shops upon, and could be sold for that purpose, but nothing could be got out of it by way of site value rate because of the restrictive tie upon it that only houses of £100 a year were to be built upon it. In order to remedy this serious defect, he would suggest that local authorities should be given power to deal with these restrictive covenants whenever they were a drawback to the selling value of the land, and if the Bill got to the Committee Stage he would move a clause to that effect.

He had referred to some of the difficulties in connection with the Bill. What were the advantages to be derived from it. All landlords would benefit by it, because the greatest cause of the agitation against them would be removed. The poor landlords especially would benefit by it, because land which remained undeveloped could only be held by rich landlords or speculators, as the poor landlord was compelled to use his land to its fullest capacity. Then there was no doubt whatever about the public gaining from it. More land would be available for building, trade would be encouraged, there would be an equitable distribution of burdens. To his mind, it was a great social reform, with which many other social reforms were closely intertwined. Who would believe, for instance, that the question of the cure of phthisis was affected by this Bill. Yet such was the case, because it was no use building expensive sanitoria, or paying doctors, so long as there existed the fœtid dens in the large towns which were the fruitful breeding-grounds of the tubercular bacillus. In the same way, with the drink problem. It was no use restricting the opportunities of getting drink while the people were housed worse than the animals. The more the question was looked into the more would the conclusion be arrived at, that all social reforms were closely connected with the reform of the Land Laws, and he sincerely hoped that this Bill would be read a second time, and become the keystone of the arch of Progress.

*MR. CRIPPS (Lancashire, Stretford) said he did not propose to follow the hon. Member for Barnstaple in some of the wide considerations he referred to in the speech he made just before the adjournment, because it appeared to him that this Bill had to be considered as a Rating Bill, and the question was whether as a Rating Bill it suggested a fair and equitable solution of what he admitted was a difficult question, and upon which there was so much difference of opinion. He did not think that those who opposed this Bill were in any sense opposing a Bill which would give facilities for the housing of the working classes. This was a matter they had to consider on the Royal Commission, and he was bound to say that for his part he could not see how they facilitated a solution of this difficulty by placing a further charge on the site value of land, the value of land itself being one of the chief reasons why it was so difficult to bring about a true solution of the housing of the working classes. That question was quite outside the purview of this Bill, and would not be substantially affected whether this Bill were passed or not. There were two points in this Bill which constituted its novelty, and it was in reference to these two points that he would ask the House to decide whether this Bill as a rating reform was a Bill which ought to be accepted or not. The novelties were these. In the first place this Bill brought in the principle of rating capitalised value which had never before been recognised in the rating law of the United Kingdom.

The second point raised by this Bill was also an extremely important one, and it was as to whether they ought to select a particular class of property, and put upon it special and exceptional burdens in addition to the burden which it shared equally at the present time with all other classes of rateable property. It was an entire mistake to suggest that the owners of land were in a position at the present moment to escape their fair share of burdens for the purposes of local taxation or rating. The question really was not whether a man was fairly rated or not at the present time, but whether land was a class of property which ought to bear some special charge beyond what other rateable property bore in reference to local improvements and local expenditure. That was the way in which the Bill was brought forward by the hon. Member for North Camberwell, and he would meet the hon. Member on that issue. Before he came to those two points he wanted to say a word about what had been called "the unearned increment." He did not know what passage the hon. Member referred to when he quoted him in regard to this unearned increment. It was obvious that from various causes land was enhanced in value outside any special effort on behalf of the owner. That was certainly a proposition familiar to anyone who had anything to do with landed property. What was said both in the Majority and in the Minority Report of the Commission was that so far as land was enhanced in value it was rated to a corresponding extent. Supposing these enhancements of value had taken place, he contended that the land was rated to a corresponding extent, and if certain land was worth £200 a year and was rated on that basis, if, owing to enhancement or to unearned increment, it became worth £500 to £600 a year, that land would be rated on the increased value. What the Royal Commission pointed out was that land was not alone in regard to this question of unearned increment, for there were other classes of property for which the value was enhanced outside the particular effort of the particular owner, and there was no reason whatever as regarded the unearned increment to put any extra burdens on land alone, and at the same time exempt all other classes of property in a similar position. It was not true that the cause of the unearned increment was always local expenditure.

DR. MACNAMARA: Not always, but in a great many cases

*MR. CRIPPS said there was one notable exception he would quote in order to show that the principle, as laid down in this Bill, went too far and would operate very unjustly. Take land which had been enhanced by a railway being brought into the city. This was a case quite outside any local expenditure of the particular district or locality. He understood that the hon. Member for North Camberwell, in a case of that kind, considered that there was no unearned increment due to public local expenditure. Nevertheless, he would put this burden on the increased value of land whether it was due to local expenditure or to outside causes. They were not dealing with the question of unearned increment at all in any real sense of the term. This Bill would apply to land whether the increased value was due to expenditure by local authorities, or some entirely outside body, such as the advent of a particular railway. If they took the case where land had decreased in value, they would still put a special and exceptional burden upon it under the Bill brought forward by the hon. Member. In rating, apart from whether there was any exceptional burden to be put upon land, they took the value of the thing as it was. It might be enhanced or diminished, and directly they went away from that principle and tried to introduce some element of prejudice, they lost sight of the principle altogether and got to the level of mere prejudice, as regarded this question of justice and fairness. What had been the operation of the Betterment Clause? When a particular improvement had given enhanced and special value to a particular district, it laid down that such district should specially contribute towards that particular improvement. But that was not a rating principle. They could not apply it fairly as regarded rating, or even seek to apply what might be perfectly true as regarded betterment. It would be unfair to lay that down as a general principle as regarded questions of rating in their various town and country districts. He did not think that in a case of this kind there was any true distinction at all between the land in urban districts and outside. He was not seeking to emphasise the difficulty which the hon. Member for Tunbridge Wells pointed out the extreme difficulty of drawing the line. As the hon. Member pointed out whenever they got to a particular point they would put such an extreme burden upon the land that it might prove to be an actual loss to be the owner. If this were a true principle to put an especial burden upon land then they ought to put it just as much upon land in the urban district as in the rural district. The attempt to limit this to urban districts was for the purpose of getting rid of the prejudice, and it did not consist in the rating principle. They ought to apply a true principle not to one class of property but to all classes, and to apply it to one class of property as proposed in this Bill would produce results which could never have been anticipated, or thought of, by the hon. Member for North Camberwell.

This Bill proposed to put 1d. in the pound on the capitalised land values. Land values capitalised were worth about thirty-three years purchase on land in towns, and upon the annual value that meant a rate of about 2s. 9d. in the pound. That penny was very misleading. It looked a small sum, but when they brought it down to the annual value, and saw how it compared with the rating of other property, it was not one penny but it was 2s. 9d., and in some cases it might be even a much larger figure. It amounted to about one-seventh of the entire value, and this was the exceptional burden which they were seeking to put upon one class of property for the first time. Let them see how it would work out. Take one or two different classes of property. Let them take building property, which was not yet ripe for building purposes. There was not the slightest doubt that under this Bill the owner of that property would be paying more in rates than he was receiving in rent. Was that just? It was contrary to every rating principle which they were applying at the present moment. Take another illustration. Take the case of an undeveloped mining property. What would be the effect? The owner of a mining property, which was not for the moment developed, would under this Bill have to pay far more per year under the head of rates than he would receive. Take a third illustration. Take for example a railway company. A railway company, after all, could not be looked upon as an institution which had done harm to a district, but probably railway companies had been great benefactors as regarded facilities of transport, and the introduction of advantages into the district through which they ran which they did not enjoy before. What did they propose under this Bill? Not only would they rate a railway company at the full annual value as the occupier, but they would take the site value of all the property over which the railway had been constructed. They would capitalise that, and if the hon. Member for Camberwell had his way they might put upon it a rate of 2s. 9d. in the pound. That would be a great injustice, and would be sufficient not only to prevent railway enterprise in the future, which would be nothing but a disaster, but it would put a burden upon railway enterprise and railway interests, for which, in his opinion, there was no justification. Upon an occasion of this kind, to seek to introduce this principle of rating capitalised value would mean an entire revolution in their rating machinery, and it could not be done justly at all without it was accompanied by a similar rating proposal with regard to all other kinds of property. The hon. Member brought forward this Bill on the ground that he was supported in it by the Minority Report.

DR. MACNAMARA: Generally.

*MR. CRIPPS said this Bill would be condemned by almost every principle which was to be found in the Minority Report. Let him take the particular subject matter with which he was dealing. The question of the rating of capitalised value was before the Royal Commission. Did the hon. Member find either in the Minority or Majority Report anything which supported his view of seeking to rate capitalised value as distinguished from annual value, which was the basis of all rating at present? He thought it was rather hard on the names associated with the Minority Report to quote them in this way. He thought it was particularly hard on those great names when they were quoted as supporting Bills which were introduced not in accordance with their Report, but altogether contrary to every principle which they put forward. They should not be made indirectly responsible for a Bill framed in the teeth of their propositions. He would give another illustration before he came to the question of special or exceptional burdens upon the land. The hon. Member introduced this Bill as one to a great extent in relief to other ratepayers. He said they would get a large fund from this Bill in relief of local taxation, but that was not the view of the Minority Report. Those who signed the Minority Report pointed out that even if they had some system of rating land values, they would not touch any new source of revenue at all. They pointed out first of all that any Bill would not in substance assist the ratepayers in this respect, although on sentimental and political grounds they thought they might get rid of a grievance which was brought forward from time to time. Surely it was very hard to attach to these names, which were appended to the Minority Report, principles not only antagonistic to their views, but principles which they considered it neither right nor just to apply to rating questions.

He would now come to the other point which was really involved in the hon. Member's Bill. Upon this point he agreed with the strong criticism of the hon. Member for Barnsley, although it would pass his wit if the Measure went into Committee to draft clauses to remedy defects in the Bill at the present moment. If landed property was rated at the present time up to its full value, and if on the same principle as all other classes of rateable property, was there any reason why they should put a special and exceptional burden upon it? That was the proposition put in its shortest and simplest form. He did not think there was any reason for taking out any one form of property and putting an exceptional and a special burden upon it, and that was the ground on which the Majority Report was based. There was no reason why land should be selected, and the considerations applying to land should apply to every other class of property. It was unfair to take out one particular class of property in order to put a special and exceptional burden upon it.

What was the answer made to-day? In the first place, if he understood the hon. Member, they ought to put some special and exceptional burden on the land because the land in a particular sense got some special and exceptional advantage. Let them follow up that argument by putting a concrete case, because one very often lost sight of an important principle of this sort by the use of general terms. He took the most familiar case in London—the case of the ninety-nine years lease. He took it that when the lease was originally made the burden of the charge with respect to the land as between the lessor and the lessee was thrown upon the owner. That was the whole basis of the Minority Report, and in that respect they agreed with the Majority. Who got the benefit during these ninety-nine years? Suppose that during the course of these ninety-nine years land had gone up very much in value, and that the lessee had given £100 for what he could now sell for £200. The owner did not get the advantage of that, nor did he get a penny out of it during the pendency of the lease. [An HON. MEMBER "What if the owner wants to sell?"] That made no difference. He took the ordinary case. Suppose they had a thoroughly secured ground rent—did they mean to say that whether that was secured twenty or thirty times over made any difference? During the pendency of the lease the lessee or occupier got the advantage out of letting the premises. The hon. Member for Camberwell would agree with him on that point. That was why he thought the Bill required looking at closely, and that was why, he assumed, the hon. Member proposed to put the rate on the occupier and not on the owner. So far as this Bill was concerned it would be almost entirely a new charge on the occupier, because they were not going to rate property under existing contracts. He recollected he pointed out last year that nothing could be more unfair than that under a Bill which purposed to relieve existing occupiers of burdens which they could hardly bear, they should make a proposal of this kind, which put a special and exceptional charge upon them, from which, at any rate at present, they were free, and in substance, as long as these existing contracts continued, this charge would be entirely a charge upon occupiers—the men who ought not to bear a charge of this kind, and who were heavily burdened at the present time. Some matters of prejudice had been introduced regarding the Bill. He should like to know whether the hon. Member for Camberwell would go into one of the crowded districts and point out that his proposal was to put a further charge on the occupiers in that district, it might be for 999 years.

DR. MACNAMARA: I have done so.

*MR. CRIPPS said that was entirely antagonistic to the argument the House had heard. Every hon. Member on the Opposition side of the House had denounced the view of putting the charge on the occupiers, and one gentleman made an animated speech, in which he said that the time had come when the owners should look after the future, because, if they did not accept this, something worse would come. It was not for him to reconcile opinions of that kind, but he was justified in pointing out that the principle of the Bill as it stood, was to put a new charge on the occupier — the man who was overburdened at the present time. The hon. Member for North Camberwell referred to what was said by Lord Goschen in 1870. Lord Goschen differed entirely from the view expressed in the Minority Report of the Commission on which his hon. friend relied. He thought that the charge did not go back to the owner. What the Royal Commissioners, the Minority included, thought was that the charge did go back on the owner when a fresh contract was made. That was perfectly right. There was no doubt that these burdens were ultimately borne by the owner. They ought to be, and he thought that they were. The only thing was that during the existence of the contract the person who might have to pay for a time was undoubtedly the occupier. The whole principle of rating law was that the occupier should pay and not the owner, but the ultimate incidence did fall back on the owner, and they could not alter that unless they had an entirely different system as regards representation on local rating authorities. What Lord Goschen pointed out was that before any scheme such as he suggested was carried out, they must have an initial alteration in representation, and have some system or other in which the owner was represented with respect to the local expenditure of local bodies.

He had listened very carefully to what was said by his hon. friend who introduced the Bill, and he was not aware of any other point made which would suggest the putting of this exceptional burden on site land or land value apart from the value of the land which was used. He had a strong view that when land was occupied they got the advantage of local expenditure, and they ought in that case to make a contribution. It was when there were buildings on land that there were occupiers, and they wanted light and all those other matters incidental to local expenditure, and it was quite right in principle to take hereditaments as a whole, because the great mass of those privileges or advantages granted by local expenditure were what were wanted by people living on the sites from day to day. It was very important to see what the principle involved was. If they once got away from that they got amongst the shoals and rocks of a large number of prejudices which were brought to bear on questions of this kind. He opposed the Bill for these two reasons. In the first place the principle of selecting a particular form of property and rating it on its capitalised value was bad and unsound, and unjust to the owners and persons interested in that particular class of property. Secondly, there was no case whatever made out why land, either in country or town, should bear an exceptional and special burden. It ought to bear the full share of burdens which it did at the present moment. The Minority Commissioners themselves said that the prejudice of some people who did not understand the rating question had gone by, and it was realised that the land did bear its full share of local burdens at present. He was quoting the substance of the words used in their Report. He denied absolutely that they should take one class of property, whether land, buildings or anything else, and treat it separately and distinctly. They ought to have equal treatment all round, and if they departed from that they would have nothing but confusion and difficulty in dealing with the rating question.

*MR. THOMAS SHAW (Hawick Burghs) said the House always heard his hon. and learned friend with pleasure on the rating question, but he confessed that he listened on the present occasion to his speech with a great sense of dissatisfaction. The two points which he elaborated with much ingenuity and care were, first, that this was a novel proposal to have taxation levied on capitalised value; and second, that there was a proposal involved in this Bill for special and exceptional rating upon ground value as apart from other types of hereditaments. The proposal in the present Bill was to tax the value of sites, and, if his learned friend preferred it, he would use the term site values. With regard to capitalised values, he was anxious to hear whether there was anything in the principle of the proposal which was made which was open to any, and, if so, to what objection. He could conceive no objection to the taxation of capitalised value unless there was some inequitable result produced by that operation. He listened in vain to the speech of his hon. and learned friend to ascertain where the inequitable result would be. But his hon. friend answered his own arguments. In the course of his speech he was quick enough to show how very flimsy his objection to this Bill was, because in the limits of a minute or two he was able to transmute capitalised value into annual value. He wondered then what the hon. and learned Gentleman was complaining about. The fact was, that capitalised value was a convenient method of ascertaining real as against fictitious value. The present system was one under which a fictitious value had substantially taken its place in local administration. Although land might be of itself of enormous value, if, at caprice, or from interested motives, the proprietor of that land was holding it back from profitable occupation by members of the community, it was dealt with at the unreal and fictitiously low valuation thus arrived at, whereas it should be treated on the basis that its real value was much higher, and that that value was in point of fact the value which the community had given it. The whole argument as to capitalised value was an argument amounting to nothing in the result except this, that the capitalised value was a proved method of getting the better of a fiction of law which had wrought much havoc in social communities. He hoped he had satisfied his hon. and learned friend that there was nothing of substance in the objection as to capitalisation. All that was required as to capitalisation was for him to transmute the whole thing into annual value, and the idea of capitalised value being objectionable at once disappeared.

The hon. and learned Gentleman's second objection was this, as he understood him—it was a cardinal objection to the Bill—that there was what he called a special and exceptional rate to be put upon site values. He would present this view to the House as a sufficient and, he thought, complete answer to that consideration. The site owners were members of the community. The community as a whole had its local exchequer. Nobody proposed, certainly not the authors of this Bill, to keep existing local taxation at its present amount, and to put on the top of that a special and exceptional rate. What was proposed was that the special and exceptional rate should fall upon the person who had value out of that rate, and thereby, *ipso jure*, there would be effected, to that extent, a relief for the local exchequer, and therefore relief from the local discontent which the present system caused. That was, in a word, the answer to what had been said with regard to a special and exceptional rate. It was only special and exceptional in respect that it went behind the artifices of the law at the present moment, and it got at the owner of the land. [An Hon. Member: "It touches the spot."] That was so, and the effect of that was that they had, *pro tanto*, relief to the entire body of the community to that extent. He was extremely interested in the opposition to this Bill, which was stated in the excellent speech of his hon. friend the Member for Tunbridge. The hon. Member stated his case with great moderation. But his initial and cardinal proposition was that this Bill was founded not on unsound but really on sound principle. He said that site value was increased by the advantages of the site and the presence of the community. That was just about as near the ratio of this Bill as anything. It was a concession that the improvement in value was not an improvement which had been executed by the owner of the site it was a concession that the owner of the site was going to reap where he had not sown; and further, it was a concession that the presence of the community had caused that increase in the value. While the community had done certain things to make the property valuable and worth living in, why should one section take the advantage of all these things without being rated for the advantages? Assume that the community provided a new park, built a new bridge, or gave a magnificent avenue or road leading through an estate, would any man in the House get up and say that it was fair that the property thus benefited by the labour, expense, industry, and enterprise of the community had a right to pocket all that without bearing the fair and special share applicable to these improvements?

Then his hon. friend said that it was a Bill for taxation in regard to betterment, but that it did not apply to the case of "worsement." The Bill provided both for the case of worsement and betterment. If a community was badly administered, if its roads went into decay or if its bridges became rotten, from that moment the site value would be decreased, and therefore the taxation on that site value would be lessened. He submitted to his hon. friend that the argument he had used with regard to betterment was altogether out of place in regard to a carefully drawn Bill of this kind. The site value went up and down according to the actual facts of the situation. His hon. friend said this Bill would not be a present benefit to the occupier. He agreed with him in that, but the reason why they could not get a present benefit to the occupier was that his hon. friend who drew this Bill had paid strict and sacred regard to private contract. On the other side they objected to this Bill because it respected existing contracts. That was a strange objection to come from such a quarter. Would they like existing contracts to be interfered with? Well, so far as he was concerned he thought some recent contracts might very well, without any real injustice, be interfered with. His hon. friend had seen that it was better that he should take the line of least resistance, and accordingly he had respected contracts. For that reason he himself regarded the Bill as a moderate and sensible proposal. There was a sense of wrong and injustice in many communities throughout the country. That sense of injustice was, he thought, well-founded. It was undoubtedly established—he thought almost by the Majority as well as by the Minority Report—that taxation within the ambit of the community itself had produced, he did not say the whole of, but in a marked sense, the very value which it was now proposed to make a contributor. There was a feeling among the members of many communities that they were being deprived of this contribution to the general well-being to which they were entitled. It was realised, and it would go on being realised in a much greater degree, if Parliament was too guarded in this matter, that site owners were not in a position of partners in the community, but really were parasites upon it, and that this state of things should be brought to an end.

Besides all these considerations there was a system of speculation in land areas and in burghal communities which was legally permissible, but was certainly in many cases socially disastrous. Under that system the industry and enterprise of the community were really put in pledge for private profit and advantage, to the prejudice of the community as a whole. This Bill was only permissive. It allowed local authorities to exercise their judgment on the particular circumstances of the locality. He could conceive many cases in which the local authorities would see no cause to interfere because the conditions of congestion on the one hand and improvements on the other did not arise; but in many other cases, such, notably, as those of great cities, it was clear that the local authorities would rejoice in this privilege of really putting the burden on the exact shoulders which ought to bear it. He totally disagreed with the argument of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the Stretford Division that this was solely and exclusively a rating question. It was far more than a rating question. There were collateral advantages to be derived from this legislation of, he had almost said, an infinite kind. The Majority and the Minority Reports of the Commission all tend to show that this problem was intimately associated with a deep and growing feeling in our midst connected with the question of the housing of the working classes. He thought this all would provide, not a new source of taxation in an exceptional sense, but would provide certainly a fresh channel for taxation in the direction of uncovered and unbuilt on land. He knew that it was said that cases of held-up land for speculative purposes did not exist. He differed from that criticism, and he would give an illustration from the county in which he dwelt. There was unbuilt on land in Edinburgh which was rated on a value of £2,570 per annum, and it only brought in an assessment to the town of £344 a year. If it were rated on 4 per cent. on its actual value it would give a rateable basis of about £220,000, and would bring in at least £27,500.

One result of taxing land according to what it would bear on its actual as distinguished from its fictitious value would be to bring necessarily an alleviation of the taxation of the remainder of the land in the borough. It would remove the existing friction and make these sites available for building dwellings and manufactories upon. The new houses would be the competitor in the market with the old houses, many of which were slum properties, and the demolition of the slum property would make way for houses more worthy of being occupied by human beings. The true issue was often avoided in discussing this great question. It had been said that the true issue was not the housing issue. In answer to that he would not give his own opinion, but that of the Housing Commission of 1885. In their report it was said—

> "At present, land available for building in the neighbourhood of our populous centres, though its capital value is very great, is probably producing a small yearly return until it is let for building. They can thus afford to keep their land out of the market, and to part with only small quantities, so as to raise the price beyond the natural monopoly price which the land would command by position. Meantime the general expenditure of the town on improvements is increasing the value of their property. If this land was rated at, say, 4 per on its selling value, the owners would have a more direct incentive to part with it to those who are desirous of building, and a twofold advantage would result to the community. First, all the valuable property would contribute to the rates, and thus the burden on the occupiers could be diminished by the increase in the rateable property. Secondly, the owners of the building land would be forced to offer their land for sale, and thus their competition with one another would bring down the price of building land, and so diminish the tax in the shape of ground rent, or price paid for land, which is now levied on urban enterprise by the adjacent landowners—a tax, be it remembered, which is no recompense for any industry or expenditure on their part, but is the natural result of the industry and activity of the townspeople themselves."

That was the testimony of the Royal Commission of 1885 with regard to the intimate connection of the taxation of site values with the problem of the housing of the poor. It was perfectly plain that there was a system afoot in this country under which land was not only purchased, but held up for the purpose of bleeding the community as a whole when it required that land for public purposes. There were some striking illustrations of that fact in and about the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, but he would only give two. There was a little block of land near the city, forty-five acres in extent, which the Water Trust some time ago wanted for the purpose of forming filtering beds. Now, the value of that land at thirty years purchase of the existing rent was £4,387, but when it was wanted for this public and necessary purpose the owner charged for it £20,000, or at the rate of 136 years purchase. Would any person get up in this House and tell them that that vast sum was a fair representation of the interest of that property in the fortunes of the community? The thing was impossible. There was another transaction, this time between the Town Council of Edinburgh and the Duke of Buccleuch. The city required land for the purpose of erecting new gas works in the neighbourhood of Granton, but within the territory of the borough. The ground extended to 105 acres, and it was partly built upon, but the average price at which it was rated was £5 10s. per acre. At thirty years purchase the amount would be £165 per acre, or a total value for the ground of £17,300. How much had the city of Edinburgh to pay for that ground? No less than £124,000, or 212 years purchase of the rating value. Therefore he contended that under the existing law, which this Bill would go a little, not the whole, way to remedy, a state of matters existed which was perfectly legal but socially scandalous. It was time that these estate owners came to the full burden of their responsibilities as members of the community in or near which their property was situated.

This Bill was not a mere rating reform. It would promote civic development on proper lines, and do much to alleviate many of the sordid conditions of life amongst the poor, and its effect would not confiscate but would eradicate what, in his opinion, was the constant confiscation of the values contributed to the land by the community. Opposition to this reform would provoke discontent and poverty, and might lead to violent efforts for a more drastic reform. In a matter of this kind, going so near the roots of our social system, the Parliament which gave promptly, gave twice. If we were too tardy in our legislation we might find that we would be too late altogether for moderation in this reform. He commended the Bill to the House as one which would essentially make for the peace and welfare of the community.

*Mr. VICARY GIBBS (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) said that the hon. and learned Gentleman had concluded his speech with something approaching to a threat of violence; that we were to agree with our enemies while they were in the way lest a worse thing might happen to us. He was not prepared to accept an unsound Bill because he was told that at some future time somebody might bring in a worse measure. On what did the hon. Gentleman rely? He read a strong passage from the finding of the Royal Commission on housing with regard to vacant building land; but he would remind the House what it had probably forgotten, that that statement was based on no evidence, and that it was objected to and dissented from by Mr., now Lord, Goschen on whom the hon. and learned Gentleman relied for some of his statements—and by Lord Salisbury and Lord Cross. The hon. and learned Gentleman assumed a case where a town needed some large and expensive permanent improvement, and asked whether it was right and proper that a man who benefited from that improvement should escape altogether from the rates. Of course it was not right and proper if by that the hon. and learned Gentleman meant the ground landlord. The ground landlord did not escape at all, as had been shown very clearly by the hon. and learned Member for Stretford, for he could not possibly be interested in anything but permanent improvement. He had made a calculation of what proportion of the rates in any city was devoted to permanent improvements, and, roughly speaking, it was under 3 per cent. Was it reasonable to enter on a very large expenditure to charge the owners with 3 per cent of it? The hon. and learned Gentleman spoke a great deal about land being rated at its actual value. What did he mean? One would suppose that it was the value the owner received from it. But the hon. and learned Gentleman meant something quite different. It meant that although the owner might be getting nothing out of the property, he was to be rated on its potential or problematical value.

MR. THOMAS SHAW: If the hon. Member will allow me, I will take the term "market value."

*MR. VICARY GIBBS said he was venturing to deal with facts as they were. He distinguished himself from those people who introduced these measures and who dealt with what might be. He was dealing with what the hon. and learned Gentleman said, not what he might have meant to say. He wished to express the pleasure with which he had heard the extremely interesting speech of the hon. Member for Camberwell. He thought some of his remarks were received with loud cheering more from the effective way in which they were made than from any real or essential merit in them. The hon. Gentleman had told a very interesting and pathetic story of what had happened to a piece of land in the neighbourhood of the Embankment. That portion of land on the Embankment had to be bought at great expense by the people who made the improvement. But the local authorities had a simple and complete remedy, by availing themselves of the recoupment clause under the ordinary law, to take any property which they thought might be of value to them in consequence of the improvement. Such a Bill as that before the House was not necessary to meet the case mentioned. The Minority Report of the Commission recommended that site values should only be rated in respect of permanent improvements. That was the Bill of last year but it was not the Bill of this year. The site values were to be rated on all improvements, whether permanent or not, or whether the owner ever had or ever would have any advantage from them. He would refer to the foreign and colonial examples given by the hon. Gentleman, as he thought it very likely they had impressed the House. New Zealand was one of the cases cited. Inquiry had been made of the town clerks of the various colonies as to who bore the rates and in almost every instance the answer was that it was left to be adjusted by freedom of contract as between the occupier and owner of property. Well, that was directly contrary to the spirit of this Bill.

MR. TREVELYAN (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland): Will the hon Gentleman give us his authority, because there are towns in the colonies where the sole rate is on the land?

*Mr. VICARY GIBBS said he had not got the document with him, but the hon. Gentleman would have an opportunity of correcting him and showing how far he had misrepresented the gentleman from whom he quoted. The hon. Member for Camberwell said that there was also a national land tax in New Zealand, but why did he not also tell the House that land in that colony was specially exempted from Income Tax. The House should realise how dangerous it was to draw an inference from one or other particular circumstance in another country unless they knew all the circumstances and all the taxation. The hon. Gentleman certainly implied that this sort of system of taxation was general in the colonies, but the hon. Mr. Reeves, in his book published this year, said that very few of the colonies had adopted the rating of land values, and those who had done so had done so quite recently, so that there was no opportunity of judging how the system had worked. In regard to the city of Paris he would quote one of his political enemies. A newspaper called *Justice*, a Socialistic organ, said that in their opinion the action of the Pâris municipality in taxing land values had done more harm than good to the working classes. Prussia had been referred to; but the hon. Gentleman who now so ably represented the Government—Mr. Grant Lawson—had told them last year that the system had been abandoned in Prussia because it was found that it did not work well.

He should like to say a few words on the general question. These measures turned up every year, but always under different names. They reminded him of those gentlemen with high sounding *aliases* who were charged at the police courts with obtaining money by false pretences. The pretence in the case of this Bill was shown in the Memorandum accompanying it, by an audacious begging of the whole question. It was said that this was a new source of revenue. That was not the view of the hon and learned Member for Launceston, nor of the hon. Member who introduced the Bill. They did not increase their supply of fruit by cutting apples in two, although that might be a cheap and simple amusement. But the proposals in this Bill were neither simple, cheap, just, nor effective, and this was not the way in which this matter could be properly handled. He recognised that there was a grievance. At present the way in which the net rateable value of property was reached was by deducting from the gross value the cost of annual repairs and insurance. It was the habit of the rating authorities to allow the maximum deduction in every case, a system which bore obviously too heavily on certain poor classes of property and too lightly on such property as Bond Street. The remedy was very simple. All they had got to do was to instruct the valuer to decide what was the difference between the value of a repairing and non-repairing lease of any particular property, and the difference was the amount which ought to be deducted, and no more. In Clause 1, sub-Section 2, there were four hypotheses, every one of which was false in fact, at any rate in London. Freeholds in possession were so few as to be practically negligible. Leaseholds might be subjected to restrictive covenants which materially reduced the value of the property. But these covenants were to be ignored as if they did not exist. Another hypothesis was that land had no building upon it. But there were such things as easements. This Bill opened up a vista of appeals and litigation, and was based on the assumption that something had happened which, in fact, had not happened, and would present a continual puzzle to valuers. They were going to respect present contracts of course, but they were going to put a fresh rate on, to relieve the rates of the man who was going to bear the fresh rate. In fact, complicated machinery was to be set up to take a shilling out of a man's pocket and put it into his other pocket. But they would get at the ground landlord in one event. If they let certain municipalities suppose that they were going to get fresh sums of money to play with and spend unremuneratively on fancy experiments, then so far they would get at the ground landlord.

The hon. Member for North Camberwell said that he explained the Bill to his constituency. Many of them were not orators of the same power or capacity as the hon. Member, and he thought they would find it very difficult to persuade any lessee to support a measure of this kind. He had no right to occupy the time of the House longer, although there were several questions to which he wished to refer. There was the question of vacant land, and the question of unoccupied houses. He would only say in conclusion that the proposal of the Bill was to rate vacant land in order to force it into the market for building purposes before the owner considered it suitable. Hon. Members opposite would say to the owner, "This land is susceptible of being built upon, and we will so rate it whether you build on it or not." The unfortunate owner, having to pay a building rate, entered into a speculation, built on the land, and, like many other speculative builders, he went bankrupt or lost a large sum of money. The houses instead of being occupied remained unlet; and having forced the unfortunate owner, in self-defence, into an injudicious speculation, it would have been thought that the poor wretch would be left alone. Not at all. Then, under the Bill, he would be told: "Halloa, you have a row of houses; they bring in no income to you; they cost you money, but we will rate you on them." First of all he was made to put up houses that nobody wanted; and then when that was proved he was again rated on houses which were a source of outgoing, not income to him. That was justice! That was reform of the rating system! This was a fantastic scheme which was based on an economic fallacy. It gave the maximum of trouble and the minimum of advantage to the country. It was perfectly true that it escaped the Scylla of dishonesty, but it was wrecked on the Charybdis of futility.

*MR. TREVELYAN said he would deal with a practical question in connection with the Bill. It had been urged that a tax of the capital value of the land would be new, revolutionary, and impossible. After all, the evidence of one man who had practical experience was worth the evidence of a hundred men who had merely a theory. In Paris during the last three years local taxation had been gradually changing. Direct taxation was imposed to some extent, instead of *octroi*, on which the revenue of the city hitherto chiefly depended. In 1889, a Committee of Assessment was appointed by the *Hotel de Ville*, which cost something between £40,000 and £50,000, to assess the whole of the city afresh—first, on the annual value, then on the capital value. In the case of the capital value, it was to be, firstly, the buildings, then the land, and thirdly both together. This Commission sat for two years; and without any greater expense than he had mentioned, it assessed the whole of the city of Paris; and now there was a tax both on the buildings, and also on the capital value of the land. He inquired into the matter himself, and he found that there was no doubt that the greatest city, next to London, in Western Europe, succeeded in doing what they were now told was difficult, revolutionary, and impossible. He wished to mention one extremely important consideration, when the House was asked to reject this Bill on the ground that it was fragmentary; and that was, that it would have a very profound influence on the National Exchequer. They had heard a good deal recently about economy, but even if they were able to reduce the expenditure on the Army and the Navy, there would still remain the unfathomable pit of local expenditure into which they were thrusting the money of the nation at the present time. It was taking a very comfortable view of human nature, which experience did not actually justify, to assume that if another Government came into power, not particularly interested in agricultural interests, it would resist the demand on the part of the towns for new doles from the National Exchequer. They were at an early stage of a long series of projects of plunder on the part of different sets of ratepayers from different kinds of Governments. He appealed to all interested in reducing the national expenditure to look forward, and see what was likely to occur with the enormous increase in local burdens. The Bill proposed other means of local taxation. They did not admit that, in this great and prosperous country, the local authorities had not themselves resources from which to provide the money they spent at the present day, and more. Their contention was, that the loud cries of the burdened ratepayer were justified, because the system of raising revenue, to which they had got accustomed, was one of the worst.

He wished to approach the question chiefly as to its aspect as a housing reform, and he thought the House would realise that, whether consciously or not, the ratepayer rebelled against the existing system. If they looked at the census returns, they would find that greater London was increasing at the rate of 95,000 per annum, and that Manchester and Salford were increasing at the rate of 61,000. How was it possible that municipalities would be able to deal with such an enormously increased population. It was only by making it easier for private enterprise to build houses that they could possibly get any real advance in dealing with overcrowding in cities. It was one of the most deplorable and strangest phenomena that, while there were complaints of overcrowding in the cities, there were constant complaints that the building trade was slack. Looking through the Reports of the *Labour Gazette* for the last eight months, he found that there was not a single month in which it was not stated that the building trade was dull or slack. What was the reason? He would recall to the House an instance he gave last year. A property was given to the London County Council at Edmonton on which to put up workmen's dwellings. The County Council decided that they could not put up dwellings on that property, and they handed it back to the philanthropic gentleman who gave it to them. They found it would be necessary to pay on the buildings £2,056, and that there would be a deficit of £793 annually. He wished to show the House how the operation of a land tax would work. The value of the land in that case was small and comparatively insignificant; and what they maintained was that in the part of the town where it was wanted to expand in order to relieve the overcrowding at the centre, there should be a relief of taxation, because almost every penny imposed in such a part was upon the building value, the land value being very small. The real point was, that if a large part of local taxation was raised from land values, it would relieve property where the land value was comparatively small—that was to say on the outskirts of a town. The only place where the burden would be greater, would be in the centre of a town, where the land values were great and growing. Was not that right, because there the value upon which assessment was based was chiefly landed property, and it was steadily increasing in value, with the increase of the town. The chief object of this taxation was to relieve buildings in the outskirts of a town; and he said that if it put some further taxation upon the occupier, the ratepayer in the centre of a town could afford to pay.

*MR. BOND (Nottingham, E.) said it was rather amusing for one who, like himself, had watched for a long time the progress of opinion with regard to this matter to see how policy had changed. He could remember the time very well when the House was treated to fierce denunciations of the great ground landlords of London, and other places; and a spirit was being engendered against those landlords, under which, although they did not derive any immediate benefit from the works on which the rates were being expended, they were to be brought in, and compelled to pay a substantial contribution to those rates. Apparently, some of those engaged in that attack had come to a better mind; and now, after many years of discussion, they had the Bill which was before the House. It was suggested that a new field of taxation would be opened up in a way which he had not been able entirely to apprehend. It was suggested that the imposition of this tax would do something to promote the housing of the working classes. He could not discover that the hon. Member had made out any real case for the suggestion contained in the memorandum of the Bill that a new area of taxation would be opened up. To complete the metaphor of his hon. friend, he did not think they would get any more out of their apples by cutting them in two, or that they could squeeze any more out of their lemons by dividing them into four. The fact really was they would find by this new system of taxation that while it produced an immense amount of inconvenience, on which sufficient stress had not yet been laid, it would not result in bringing into the exchequer of the local authorities one single penny more. It would have the effect of reducing rather than of increasing their revenue, because this system of double valuation and taxation could not be carried on without involving extra expense; and expense which would recur from time to time. Further, it would produce an immense number of appeals, and they would have the inconvenience and friction which inevitably resulted. Every person who paid or received rent, every owner of property would find the inconvenience which arose in cases of dispute with regard to the reductions which had to be made, and very considerable loss would accrue to the community.

As to the question whether the Bill would have any appreciable effect on the housing problem, he could not discover what had got into the heads of the very able men who signed the Minority Report when they agreed to the suggestion on which the Bill was based. It seemed to him that it would tend rather to discourage than to encourage buildings. The case put forward was that land, not occupied by houses, should be brought before an Assessment Committee, and that an attempt should be made to estimate its intrinsic value; and that on that intrinsic value a rate should be levied. Incidentally, he would remark that that was an entire departure from the principle of valuation as at present adopted. Assessments were not made on capital value, but on the income derived from the property; or if the hereditament was occupied by the owner, then on the rent he would be able to obtain from a hypothetical tenant. A great deal of criticism of the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite was based on an entire misapprehension as to the way in which rating was conducted in England. He suggested that assessment was based on a fiction. He said that the assessor, in determining what value should be put on a particular property for assessment purposes, was actually benighted enough to have regard to the existing condition of affairs, the state of the property, and the rent it was producing, or might be supposed to produce. That the hon. and learned Gentleman called fiction; but it would be much more of a fiction if the assessor set himself to find out what a particular land would be worth if put into the market. The real sting of the Bill was that it proposed, for the first time, to set up the principle of rating unoccupied land, or land within an urban district occupied as agricultural land, not on the value it produced, but on the value it might fetch if it were used for other purposes than those to which it was devoted. It was evident that they would be embarking on a very dangerous course if they accepted that principle. The suggestion that the adoption of this principle would facilitate the erection of houses, and would remove the evils of overcrowding, which they all deplored, he could not accept. He knew something about the housing question from practical experience, and he also knew something—indeed, if he might say so, more than many hon. Members—of the way in which towns were developed. He did not think that the House realised that in dealing with the housing question they had to rely principally, if not entirely, on the efforts of speculative builders and commercial men who went into the business with a view of getting a fair return for their money.

What was the process which usually took place? Assuming it was desirable to extend the area of building in a town owing to the increase of population, land was mapped out on the outskirts, oftentimes on a large scale. Then the people engaged in that class of business set to work and made roads; and they then offered the land on building leases. A man who was considering whether he would go into a venture of that kind would be very much disposed to take into account the fact that under this scheme the land which he took, whether he would be able to put it to immediate use or not, would be rated from the very first; and in course of years that might amount to a very formidable sum. It should be remembered that it was not because a particular speculator thought land was ripe for building that, therefore, it was ripe. There might be a check in the growth of the population of the town, or in the prosperity of the district. It would be felt to be a monstrous injustice if a man, who found himself with the whole estate on his hands owing to some mistake, found himself involved in the payment of rates to a considerable amount on land that was practically useless to him. That would discourage rather than encourage building. He was quite unable to understand how those who signed the Minority Report arrived at the conclusion they did. If at any time the owner of land set to work to arrange with a builder to put up houses, both sides would have to take into account all the facts of the case. A man who was going to build would give less for the land where the rates were high, and more for that on which the rates were low, and therefore he could not see what possible advantage could be obtained from separating the rates which belonged to the land from those which appertained to the building on the land. The whole argument was founded on an illusory basis. He objected to the Bill because it did not carry out the promises held forth in the Memorandum. He thought that to effect such the separation proposed would be of no value as a means of increasing the revenues of a town, and he was perfectly sure that to introduce a system not thoroughly needed and foreign to our habits and traditions would create an immense amount of friction, inconvenience, and injustice, and it could be hardly worth while to bring in such a system merely to produce an illusion in men's minds that they were not paying such high rates as they were before. He hoped the Motion for the rejection of this Bill would be carried by a large majority.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs) said this subject was one which excited the greatest interest in many parts of the country, and yet, during the whole of the discussion, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board had been practically the sole occupant of the Treasury Bench. Of course every one recognised how competent the hon. Gentleman was to deal with subjects of this kind, and what his knowledge on the subject was, but the Government appeared not to have realised the fact that this was no mere whim or notion of his hon. friend the Member for Camberwell. This was not a question of coquetting in an amiable sort of way with some strange doctrines. The object of the Bill was one which attracted the warmest appreciation and approval throughout the country. The hon. and learned Member for Stretford had asked what was the real principle of the Bill. He would say what he considered to be the principal and main object of the Bill. It was the recognition of the distinction between site value and structural value. It was the recognition of the fact that they had separate values; that they advanced or receded on altogether different scales and sometimes in opposition to each other. He thought that once they recognised that fact, they were led directly to the purpose of the Bill—that it should be incumbent on the local authorities to ascertain and record those separate values. The further action which should be taken was left to the local authorities themselves, except that the Bill excluded existing contracts.

This extreme moderation on the part of his hon. friend had been seized on by hon. Gentlemen opposite as a fault in the Bill. He believed the opinion of the country would have supported his hon. friend if he had dealt a little more valiantly with existing contracts. That might have been done without creating any terrifying precedents. Sir Robert Peel dealt in a more manful way with existing contracts when he introduced the income-tax in 1842; but his hon. friend, coming upon somewhat degenerate days, had yielded to what he believed to be the general sentiment, and had omitted existing contracts altogether. The advantages of this recognition of site values as apart from the general value of the hereditament, were clearly set out in the Report of the Minority Commissioners. They pointed, first of all, to the fact that the benefit of municipal and other improvements attached to the site, and, therefore, if a tax were necessary at all, it ought to be in proportion to the site value. It was not the house, but the site, that was increased in value. Here was a case of the value that had been given to land within quite recent years by a great public improvement. The Manchester Ship Canal, which was largely made with the money that was found by the City of Manchester, had the effect of raising the value of land on the Trafford Park estate from £237 an acre to £4,840 an acre within the years of its construction. That was a proof, surely, that there was a case for saying that land so artificially increased in value should contribute to the very expensive processes by which that new value was given.

The Minority Commissioners further pointed out that if more of the burden of rates was thrown on the site, the proportion left to be borne by the buildings would be diminished, and this would weigh with builders. Then there was the question of overcrowding, which, of course, was part of the same matter, and which was greatly aggravated by the present system. The rating of sites, in the opinion of the Commissioners, would help to mitigate this evil; and, if it was objected that it ran in any way counter to established principles, they pointed out that a structure was, after all, perishable property, but that the site was permanent property, which rather increased than diminished in value. These were the sort of arguments, of which they had not heard much in that debate, by which the Minority Commissioners supported this proposal. The most urgent matter of all seemed to be to break down the ring fence which was in some places established round a rising and prosperous community by the owner or owners, who withheld their land from building in order to gain the benefit in the increased value. Public energy or private enterprise increased the value of the property, and why should it not be assessed? They wished to prevent the occupiers from actually suffering in their health, comfort, and convenience, by the action of such owners, for suffering was caused, and an insanitary condition of things was created by the circumscription of a community. Anything which tended to distribute the burden more equably, and to prevent such evils, deserved the favourable consideration of Parliament. This Bill represented a desirable reform in the interests, not only of urban communities but of the whole people, and he gave it his heartiest support.

MR. GRANT LAWSON (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk), regretted that his right hon. friend the President of the Local Government Board could not reply, but he was absent in order to pay a last tribute of respect to an old friend. This was a very difficult question, and he quite believed that it would be possible on a public platform to obtain a certain amount of applause and support to the principle that someone else ought to bear the burden of taxation. He had great sympathy with the restlessness of the ratepayers under the increasing weight of their burdens. Perhaps it would not be fair to consider how far the occupiers had been compensated for that increase by increased health, and consequently increased wage-earning capacity, or how far the weight of the burdens had arisen from the apathy of the ratepayers, who would not take part as councillors, or even as voters in their own affairs. But one thing was certain, that both the control and the advantage of the expenditure of rates from day to day came into the hands of the occupiers as such. The ratepayers of this country had, he believed, this serious grievance, that only one form of property, real property, was put under substantial contribution to local burdens; but this Bill proposed to put an additional burden on realty, which was the very part of our property that was already injured by our rating system. He objected to the Bill in the interests of economic local government. Anything which would distinctly encourage the local authorities to extravagance must stand condemned; and this applied to the Memorandum which prefaced the Bill, which stated that it was framed to provide local authorities "with a new source of revenue." Nothing could be more disastrous than to give these authorities the impression that a new gold-mine had been discovered in which they could dig.

With regard to occupied houses, the whole hereditament is rated together, and it is rated at its full annual value, so that nothing else is left to rate. There is consequently no new source of revenue. To rate unoccupied houses would be to take from those who had not sold or let their houses in order to give to those who had. This, too, would have a most discouraging effect on the building trade. Land in an urban district, if it was not occupied, received no benefit from the expenditure of the rates. This was a very difficult question, but he wished to dispose of the impression that the increased value of some of our towns was mainly due to the expenditure of the rates. In nineteen cases out of twenty it was due to some natural position, or to money laid out not by the local authorities but by railway companies or industries due to private enterprise. In the case of the land for the Edinburgh gas-works, which had been cited, the Duke of Buccleuch and his ancestors had spent £500,000 there on making a harbour. High rates, so far from benefiting land in the neighbourhood of the town, were absolutely detrimental to its value.

The hon. Member for the Elland Division had both in this and the previous year made considerable electioneering use of the proportions to which land rents in towns had increased entirely owing to the expenditure of the rates, but he could cite a case where land was offered to a Town Council as a free gift, yet so high were the rates upon it that they refused. Did that show that the owners of land had lost nothing by the rates increasing? There was a misapprehension as to who provided the streets and sewers for the accommodation of urban property. Hon. Members not learned in the law probably considered that the streets and sewers were provided by the community, while hon. Members learned in the law were aware that they had to be provided by the landowner. He would like to know where was the land in urban districts that was wilfully kept out of the market. He personally knew of land in a high-class district where the landowner was not prepared to let his property go to be used for small cottages or factories, but in so doing—although he was not restrained by covenants—he was acting in good faith towards those who already had built high-class houses on the estate. Other land might be kept out of the market because the owner had not received an offer which he felt justified in accepting. But it was suggested that one of the advantages of this Bill was that it would bring land into the market. Was that so? What it did do was to seek to so arrange the taxation as to force one individual to part with his property to another. It was a proposal to put a special tax on unoccupied land in urban districts so as to force individual owners to part with it, not to the State but to some other individual who might desire to possess it, but was not prepared to pay the present value of it.

In a recent debate it was suggested that the taxation in South Africa should be so arranged as to compel the native to go to work on terms which he would not otherwise accept, and it was urged that that was justified because cheap labour was necessary for the development of South Africa. To-day it was being contended that cheap land was necessary for the development of our towns, and, consequently, they had the proposal to compel landowners to part with their land. Was it the duty of the community so to arrange taxation that one citizen should be forced to part with his property to another citizen on terms which he would not otherwise accept? He maintained that the rating of unoccupied land at a hypothetical value was not a legitimate, though it might be a new, source of revenue. Let the House remember that the Royal Commission had already reported that there was no considerable undeveloped sources of taxation available for local purposes.

It was said that this Bill did not impose a new burden; that it simply redistributed an old burden. That might be so if they put a limit on the spending powers of local authorities. But only give them the idea that they had a new fund to draw upon, and they would at once increase their expenditure. The economic objection to subventions in aid of the rates from the exchequer was that it encouraged extravagance. Their objection must equally apply to a rate which was paid only by a small proportion of the community, as was proposed to be authorised under this Bill. Lord Balfour of Burleigh, in his Report on that matter, used very strong language. He said the danger was that if a rate were charged directly on the lessors, it led to extravagance and plunder, since the lessees, in most cases, had no votes, or if they possessed any at all, it was an inadequate voting power. There had been an attempt to fasten this Bill on Lord Balfour. But the Bill differed from the Minority Report of the Royal Commission on the three most essential points—the amount of the rate, the hereditament on which it was to be levied, and the purposes to which it was to be applied. Take the first point. The Minority Report recommended a strictly limited rate. But this Bill proposed a rate of 1d. in the £ on the capital value. That was an extremely deceptive proposal. It really amounted to an income-tax of 2s. 9d. in the £, to be levied on one particular form of property, whether any income was forthcoming from it or not. As regarded the next point, the Bill proposed that the rate should be levied on all land in urban districts, where, as one knew, there was much land in so-called urban districts which was of a purely agricultural character. Lord Balfour's suggestion, on the other hand, was that only land covered by houses or ripe for building, in districts where the population was comparatively dense should be thus rated. He said that to put a tax on other land would be anomalous and oppressive, and so undoubtedly it would be.

Again, the Minority Report recommended that the rate should only be applied to purposes closely connected with and tending to improve the value of land. But under this Bill it might be used for the purchase of water carts, and how could such expenditure be held to improve the value of a reversion at the end of a ninety-nine years' lease? The Bill could not, therefore, fairly be fathered on his noble friend the Secretary for Scotland. The Report suggested many safeguards that were not to be found in the Bill. One was that if a local authority thought certain land was ripe for building purposes, the burden of proving that should rest on it. But there was no such provision in this Bill. Then there was the difficulty of valuation. How was it possible to arrive at a fair judgment of the capital value of something which had never been sold in the market? How was it possible to decide the value of a site apart from the building on it? According to the expert witnesses, whose evidence was relied on in the Majority Report, separate valuation would be expensive, complicated, and uncertain; while those who relied on the Minority Report held that it could be efficiently carried out without unreasonable expense. He did not deny that a valuation of the site as separate from the structure could be arrived at—a valuation of some sort, If one paid a valuer he would value anything. But these were valuations on which the rights of individuals would depend, and the contributions of individuals would be levied. If a bad valuer were employed, it would be necessary to employ a good lawyer; so that to valuers or lawyers the rating authority would probably have to disburse an enormous sum if the principle of valuing the site apart from the structure were adopted. In order to meet the difficulty presented by the existence of so many covenants restricting the use of land, and the existence of so many easements, the hon. Member for Barnstaple had suggested that the local authority should be empowered to dispense with such covenants. What, however, was to happen to the rights of those in whose interests the covenants had been made? They would have to have continual re-valuations, or else great injustice would be done to the different persons interested in the matter.

He had a report in his hand as to the effect in Berlin of attempting the separation of site values and structural values, from which it appeared that the inconvenience which it had entailed on that city had been so great, and the cost so excessively heavy, that it had been decided to abolish the tax altogether. It would perhaps, however, be worth while to accept the risks attending the Bill if it would adjust local burdens more fairly. But what would actually happen? Take the case of an occupier of a moderate house on a good site, and of an occupier of a good house on a moderate site, both rated at present at £200 a year. If this Bill passed, the man whose house was on a good site would not only pay on £200, but would also pay this extra tax on the site, while the other man would escape the site tax. The measure violated all the four canons of taxation laid down by Adam Smith—that the contribution should be in proportion to the revenue enjoyed under the protection of the State; that the tax which each individual paid should be certain, and not arbitrary; that it should be levied at the time most convenient to the contributor; and that it should be levied in the most economical manner possible. He asked the House to reject it on the ground that it would cause extravagance and introduce a new principle—an annual tax on capital value—in respect to one form of property only. His most solid objection to this Bill was that it did not in any way approach the real remedy for the high rates which were the crux of the housing problem, while on the contrary it would create many more grievances than it would remedy. The real solution was to obtain contributions from other forms of property than the form which was now rated, and the passing of the Bill would only delay the steps which the Government would shortly have to take for the reconsideration of the whole question of the incidence of the taxation.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 170; Noes, 183. (Division List No. 45.)

AYES.

Allan, Sir William (*Gateshead*)
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hon. Herbt. Hy
Austin, Sir John
Barry, E. (*Cork, S.*)
Beckett, Ernest William
Bell, Richard
Bignold, Arthur
Black, Alexander William
Blake, Edward
Boland, John
Bolton, Thomas Dolling
Bousfield, William Robert
Brigg, John
Broadhurst, Henry

Bryce, Right Hon. James
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland
Burns, John
Burt, Thomas
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Robert
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Chamberlayne, T. (*Southmptn*
Channing, Francis Allston
Clancy, John Joseph
Cogan, Denis J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*)
Crean, Eugene
Cremer, William Randal
Crombie, John William
Crooks, William
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M. Vaughan- (*Cardign*
Delany, William
Dewar, John A. (*Inverness-sh.*)
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Donelan, Captain A.
Doogan, P. C.
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Dunn, Sir William
Edwards, Frank
Elibank, Master of
Emmott, Alfred
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferguson R. C. Munro (*Leith*)
Ffrench, Peter
Field, William
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Flynn, James Christopher
Gilhooly, James
Grant, Corrie
Grey, Rt. Hn. Sir E. (*Berwick*
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hammond, John
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm.
Harwood, George
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hayden, John Patrick
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-

Hayter, Rt Hon Sir Arthur D.
Healy, Timothy Michael
Hemphill, Rt. Hon. Chas. H.
Hobhouse, C. E. H. (*Bristol, E.*
Jacoby, James Alfred
Jones, David B. (*Swansea*)
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kennedy, Patrick James
Labouchere, Henry
Lambert, George
Law, H. Alex. (*Donegal, W.*)
Leese, Sir Jos. F. (*Accrington*)
Leigh, Sir Joseph
Leng, Sir John
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, David
Lundon, W.
MacDonnell, Dr. Mark A.
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
M'Crae, George
M'Fadden, Edward
M'Killop, W. (*Sligo, North*)
M'Laren, Sir Charles Benjamin
Mansfield, Horace Rendall
Mitchell, Edw. (*Fermanagh, N.*
Mooney, John J.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (*Carmarthen*)
Morley, Charles (*Breconshire*)
Morley, Rt. Hn. John (*Montrose*
Murphy, John
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Newnes, Sir George
Nolan, Col. John P (*Galway, N.*)
Nolan, Joseph (*Louth, S.*)
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, James F. X. (*Cork*)
O'Brien, K. (*Tipperary, Mid*)
O'Brien, Patrick (*Kilkenny*)
O'Brien, P. J. *Tipperary, N.*)
O'Brien, William (*Cork*)
O'Connor, Jas. (*Wicklow, W.*)
O'Connor, T. P. (*Liverpool*)
O'Donnell, T. (*Kerry, W.*)
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly, J. (*Roscommon, N.*)
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
O'Shee, James John
Palmer, Sir C. M. (*Durham*)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pease, J. A. (*Saffron Walden*)

Pickard, Benjamin
Pirie, Duncan V.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Priestley, Arthur
Randles John S.
Rea, Russell
Reddy, M.
Redmond, Jn. E. (*Waterford*)
Redmond, William (*Clare*)
Reid, Sir R. Threshie (*Dumfries*
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, John H. (*Denbighs.*)
Robertson, Edmund (*Dundee*)
Robson, William Snowdon
Roche, John
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Rose, Charles Day
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (*Cleveland*)
Samuel, S. M. (*Whitechapel*)
Shaw, Charles E. (*Stafford*)
Shaw, Thomas (*Hawick, B.*)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, Samuel (*Flint*)
Soares, Ernest J.
Spencer, Rt. Hn. CR (*Northants*
Sullivan, Donal
Thomas, Sir A. (*Glam., E.*)
Thomas, F. Freeman (*Hastings*
Thompson, Dr EC (*Monagh'n, N*
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Wallace, Robert
Warner, Thos. Courtenay T.
Wason, E. (*Clackmannan*)
Wason, J. Cathcart (*Orkney*)
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Whiteley, G. (*York, W. R.*)
Whiteley, H. (*Ashton-u.-Lyne*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Williams, O. (*Merioneth*)
Wilson, J. W. (*Worcestersh. N.*
Woodhouse, Sir J. T. (*Hud'rsf'ld*)

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Herbert Gladstone and Mr. Causton.

AYES.

Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Aird, Sir John
Allhusen, Aug. Henry Eden
Allsopp, Hon. George
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Right Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Baird, John George Alexander
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Man'r*
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (*Hornsey*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bigwood, James
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith

Boulnois, Edmund
Bowles, T. G. (*Lynn Regis*)
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Brown, Sir Alx. H. (*Shropsh.*)
Bull, William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, John George
Campbell, Rt Hn J A (*Glasg*)
Campbell, J. H. M. (*Dublin Univ.*
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H
Cavendish, R. F. (*N. Lancs.*)
Cavendish, V C W (*Derbysh.*)
Cayzer, Sir Charles William
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Chamberlain, Rt Hon J (*Birm*
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Chaplin, Right Hon. Henry
Charrington, Spencer

Clare, Octavius Leigh
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Collings, Right Hon. Jesse
Colston, Chas. Edw H. Athole
Corbett, A. Cameron (*Glasg.*)
Cox, Irwin Edwd. Bainbridge
Craig, Charles Curtis (*Antrim, S*
Cranborne, Viscount
Crossley, Sir Savile
Cubitt, Hon. Henry
Dalkeith, Earl of
Davies, Sir H. D. (*Chatham*)
Dickinson, Robert Edmond
Dickson, Charles Scott
Dimsdale, Rt. Hon. Sir Jos. C.
Disraeli, Coningsby Ralph

Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Duke, Henry Edward
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Hart

Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas

Faber, Edmund B. (*Hants, W.*)
Faber, George Denison (*York*)
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Ed.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
FitzGerald, Sir Robt. Penrose-
Fitzroy, Hon. Edward Algernon
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William

Garfit, William
Gibbs, HnA.G.H(*City of Lond*
Gibbs, Hn. Vicary (*St. Albans*
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (*Elgin & Nrn*
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
Greene, W. Raymond- (*Cambs*
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Guthrie, Walter Murray

Hamilton, Rt Hn Ld. G. (*Midx*
Hanbury, Rt. Hn. Robt. Wm.
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Henderson, Sir Alexander
Hobhouse, RtHnH (*Somrst E*
Hogg, Lindsay
Horner, Frederick William
Hozier, Hon. Jas. Henry Cecil
Hudson, George Bickersteth

Jeffreys, Rt. Hn. Arthur Fred
Jessel, Capt. Herbert Merton
Johnstone, Heywood

Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*
Kimber, Henry
Knowles, Lees

Laurie, Lieut.-General
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*
Lawrence, Sir Jos. (*Monm'th*)
Lawson, John Grant
Lee, A. H. (*Hants, Fareham*)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Frederick S.
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Chas. W. (*Evesham*
Long, Rt. Hn. W. (*Bristol, S.*
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Francis William
Lowther, C. (*Cumb. Eskdale*)
Lowther, Rt. Hon. Jas. (*Kent*)
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*
Lucas, Reg'ld J. (*Portsmouth*)

Macdona, John Cumming
Maconochie, A. W.
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Maxwell, RtHnSirH E(*Wigt'n*
Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.
Middlemore, Jn. Throgmorton
Milvain, Thomas
Mitchell, William (*Burnley*)
Montagu, G. (*Huntingdon*)
Morgan, D. J. (*Walthamstow*)
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mount, William Arthur
Muntz, Sir Philip A.
Murray, RtHnAGraham (*Bute*
Murray, Col. Wyndham (*Bath*)

Newdegate, Francis A. N.
Nicholson, William Graham
Nicol, Donald Ninian

O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens

Palmer, Walter (*Salisbury*)
Percy, Earl
Pilkington, Lt.-Col. Richard
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Purvis, Robert
Pym, C. Guy

Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Rattigan, Sir William Henry
Remnant, Jas. Farquharson
Renshaw, Sir Charles Bine
Renwick, George
Ridley, Hon. M. W (*Stalybridge*
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Round, Rt. Hon. James

Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford
Sadler, Col. Saml. Alexander
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Seely, Chas. Hilton (*Lincoln*)
Seely, Maj. J. E. B. (*Isle of Wight*
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (*Renfrew*)
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Smith, Jas. Parker (*Lanarks.*)
Stone, Sir Benjamin

Talbot, Rt Hn J. G. (*Oxford Univ*
Thornton, Percy M.
Tollemache, Henry James
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. E. M.
Tritton, Charles Ernest
Tufnell, Lieut.-Col. Edward
Tuke, Sir John Batty

Valentia, Viscount
Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir W. H.
Welby, Lt.-Col. A. C. E. (*Taunton*
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Williams, RtHnJPowell-(*Birm*
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Willox, Sir John Archibald
Wilson, A. S. (*York, E. R.*)
Wilson, John (*Falkirk*)
Wilson-Todd, W. H. (*Yorks.*)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (*Bath*
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wrightson, Sir Thomas
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

Yerburgh, Robert Armstrong
Younger, William

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

Words added.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Second Reading put off for six months.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill intituled, "An Act to empower the Urban District Council of Nantwich to supply gas; and to provide for the transfer of the undertaking of the Nantwich Gas Company, Limited, to the Council; and to make further and better provision with regard to the supply of electricity; and for the improvement, health, local government, and finance of the district; and for other purposes." [Nantwich Urban District Council Bill [Lords.]

Adjourned at twenty minutes before Six o'clock, till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 30*th March*, 1903.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

OLD BRIDEWELL BURYING GROUND BILL [H.L.].

[THIRD READING.]

Order of the day for the Third Reading read.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

LORD MONKSWELL: My Lords, I should like to say one word before this Bill is read a third time. I do not propose to offer any opposition to the Third Reading, but I should like to state that the Select Committee who passed the Bill did a thing which is not at all usual—they set aside the public law in favour of a private owner and decided that, although under a public law a private owner was not entitled to build on his land, still the circumstances were such that the public law might be set aside in this case. The Bill excited a good deal of observation on the part of various societies, among others the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, of which my noble friend the Earl of Meath is President, and petitions against the Bill were lodged by the Corporation of the City of London, as well as by the London County Council. What I would suggest is that the action of the Select Committee with regard to this Bill should not be considered in any way as a precedent in favour of setting aside the public law on behalf of private individuals. This particular instance is not at all a flagrant one. The ground that it is proposed to allow the owner to build over is a very small piece, and I am not at all sure that it would be particularly valuable as a public open space, but I am sorry the noble Earl the Chairman of the Select Committee is not here to give some explanation of the reasons which induced his Committee to act in the way they did with regard to this Bill.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (The EARL of MORLEY): My Lords, I did not know that my hon. friend intended making any remarks on this Bill, otherwise I would have looked into the matter more carefully than I have done. I am not prepared to go into the details of the matter, and how far the Open Spaces Act of 1887 was contravened by the Committee, but I feel quite certain that my hon. friend, Lord Dartrey, who presided over the Committee, considered all these matters very carefully. I am glad the noble Earl does not intend to oppose the Bill, and I quite agree with him that these are matters that should be carefully considered when they come before Parliament. This particular case affects a very small bit of land, and I understand that beyond the protest he has made, the noble Earl does not oppose the Bill.

Bill read 3^{a} and passed, and sent to the Commons.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

Report from, that the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Birmingham District Tramways Bill [H.L.] ought to be dispensed with and the Bill allowed to proceed; read, and agreed to.

Pentillie Estate. Petition for a Private Bill; together with a copy of the proposed Bill annexed thereto; read, and referred to two English judges.

Lochnell Estate. Petition for a Private Bill; together with a copy of the proposed Bill annexed thereto; read, and referred to judges in Scotland.

Macclesfield and District Electric Tramways Bill [H.L.]. Committed; the Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Plymouth and Stonehouse Gas Bill [H.L.]; Queensland Investment and Land Mortgage Bill [H.L.]. Read 3^{a}, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

South-Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway Bill [H.L.]; South-Eastern and London, Chatham, and Dover Railways Bill [H.L.]; Sutton Coldfield Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Cardiff Railway Bill [H.L.]; Manchester Southern Tramways (Lancashire) Bill [H.L.]; Manchester Southern Tramways (Cheshire) Bill [H.L.]; South Lancashire Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Bill [H.L.]; North Cheshire Tramways Bill [H.L.]. Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Lord Wandsworth be proposed to the House as a Member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Lord Hylton; read, and agreed to.

Frinton-on-Sea Sea Defences Bill [H.L.]; Rickmansworth Gas Bill [H.L.]; Pelican and British Empire Life Office Bill [H.L.]; Wellington (Salop) Gas Bill [H.L.]; Southampton Harbour Bill [H.L.]; Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation Bill [H.L.]; Harrow and Stanmore Gas Bill [H.L.]; Bournemouth Corporation Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Poole and District Electric Traction Bill [H.L.]; Birmingham Corporation Bill [H.L.]. Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Lord Hylton be proposed to the House as a member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Lord Wandsworth; read, and agreed to.

PRIVATE AND PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION BILLS.

Ordered, That Standing Orders Nos. 92 and 93 be suspended; and that the time for depositing petitions praying to be heard against Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills, also the time for depositing Documents relating to any Order under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, which would otherwise expire during the adjournment of the House at Easter, be extended to the first day on which the House shall sit after the recess.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

COMMERCIAL.

No. 2. (1903)—Correspondence respecting the ratification of the Sugar Convention, signed at Brussels, 5th March, 1902.

No. 3. (1903)—List of countries engaged in the production of sugar, together with value of exports from the United Kingdom to each of the said countries, for each of the last five years, etc.

PORT NESS HARBOUR (ISLAND OF LEWIS).

Correspondence and Report of Mr. William Shield, M.I.C.E., P.R.S.E., in regard to the condition of the harbour of Port Ness, Island of Lewis.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (SCOTLAND).

Eighth Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Scotland, 1902. Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

POLLING DISTRICTS.

(County Borough of Huddersfield)—Order made by the council of the county borough of Huddersfield, altering certain polling districts in the borough.

Borough of Reading—Order made by the council of the borough of Reading, altering certain polling districts in the borough.

METROPOLITAN CATTLE MARKET.

Account of moneys received and paid by the Chamberlain of the City of London for the year 1902; also an account of extraordinary works executed, other than general repairs, for the same period. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM.

Statement of the funds, 5th January, 1903. Delivered (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

DECLARATION OF THE SOVEREIGN AGAINST TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

Petition for abrogation of; of Roman Catholics signing; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

LUNACY ACTS AMENDMENT (LONDON) BILL (H.L.)

Earl CARRINGTON: My Lords, I ask leave to introduce a Bill to authorise the London County Council to provide receiving houses for the reception of persons mentally affected or alleged to be of unsound mind, and to authorise the detention of such persons in such houses; and for other purposes connected therewith. The Bill was brought forward by my noble friend Lord

Monkswell some time ago, and the noble Earl the Chairman of Committees said he could not sanction it proceeding as a private Bill. I understand that the noble Lord approves of the provisions which were explained by Lord Monkswell at the time, and I therefore beg to introduce the Bill and move that it be read a first time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 1ª."—(*Earl Carrington.*)

The LORD CHANCELLOR (The Earl of Halsbury): I think it right to remind the noble Earl that he is not in order in making a speech on the First Reading. If it was his intention to make any observations at this stage he should have given notice, so that persons who take a different view might be able to be present and take part in the discussion. The irregularity of the noble Lord is not in moving the First Reading of the Bill without notice, but in making a speech in doing so.

Earl CARRINGTON: I hope the noble and learned Lord will excuse the irregularity, of which I was not aware.

On Question, agreed to; Bill read 1ª; and to be printed.

LAND REGISTERS (SCOTLAND) BILL [H.L.]

[Second Reading.]

Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Lord Balfour of Burleigh): My Lords, I explained the provisions of this Bill in presenting it to your Lordships the other day. I have had no communication which leads me to think that there will be any opposition to it at this stage, and therefore I do not think I have anything more to add to the explanation I gave on the occasion of the First Reading. There will be one or two small points to be dealt with in Committee. I propose to postpone the Committee Stage till 30th April, and I hope those in Scotland who are interested in the Bill and desire any Amendment will accept that as ample notice, and that I shall not be asked to postpone the Committee Stage to a later date.

On Question, agreed to; Bill read 2ª (according to Order), and committed to a Committee of the whole House on Thursday, 30th of April next.

THE STATE OF THE ARMY.

The Earl of WEMYSS: My Lords, I beg to move for a Return showing, with regard to the Army, on the 1st January, 1903:—(1) the Establishment; (2) the number actually serving; (3) the number serving under twenty years of age, nineteen years of age, eighteen years of age, seventeen years of age, sixteen years of age, and under; (4) the standard heights for different Arms; (5) the number below standard height in different Arms; (6) the standard chest measurement for different Arms; (7) the number below the standard in different Arms; (8) same returns as to Establishment, etc., applied to the Militia; (9) the number of Army Reserve in 1903 and 1902; (10) the number of Militia Reserve in 1903 and 1902. I understand that his Majesty's Government, wishing to give the public all the information possible with reference to the state of the Army, intend to grant this Return. I am very glad to hear that that is so. I have also communicated with my noble friend the Under-Secretary and informed him that there is an addition to this Motion which I should like to make, and which I also think the Government will accept. The Estimates this year are £34,000,000; ten years ago they were about half that amount. Without taking the trouble of hunting through the different items, one would wish to know wherein the difference has arisen, and I would add to my Motion a request for a Return showing the items of expenditure in the Army Estimates, 1903-4, amounting to £34,245,000, in excess of those of 1893-94, amounting to £17,631,300.

Moved, for Return showing with regard to the Army on 1st January, 1903: (1) The Establishment; (2) the number actually serving; (3) the number serving under twenty years of age, nineteen years of age, eighteen years of age, seventeen years of age, sixteen years of age and under; (4) the standard heights for different Arms; (5) the number below standard height in different Arms; (6) the standard chest measurement for different Arms; (7) the number below the standard in different Arms; (8) same returns as to Establishment, etc., applied to the Militia; (9) the number of Army Reserve in 1903 and 1902; (10) the number of Militia Reserve in 1903 and 1902, and (11) the items of expenditure in the Army Estimates 1903-4, amounting to £34,245 000, in excess of those of 1893-94, amounting to £17,631,300.—(*The Earl of Wemyss.*)

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (The Earl of HARDWICKE): My right hon. friend the Secretary of State has no objection to giving the noble Earl the information he requires on this subject. I do not think, however, that it is necessary to lay a Return on the Table, because, as I explained the other night in answer to a question by Lord Denman, a new Annual Return is going to be issued very shortly, which, with the exception of the information asked for in Paragraphs 5 and 7, will contain complete figures with regard to all the points mentioned in the Motion.† In Question No. 5 the noble Earl asks for the number below standard height in different Arms on 1st January, 1903, and in Question No. 7 he asks for the number below the standard—that is to say, I presume, chest measurement, weight, etc.—in the different Arms on the same day. To lay that Return on the Table it would be necessary to have taken the height, chest measurement, and weight on that particular day of every soldier in the British Army. Of course, it is perfectly possible to give the noble Earl the information he desires; but I submit that it would cause a great deal of work and a great deal of trouble throughout the Army, because we should have to have every man measured and weighed on a particular day. If the noble Earl is willing to withdraw Questions Nos. 5 and 7 from his Motion, I am sure the War Office and all concerned with Army administration will be grateful. As regards the supplementary information for which he asks, I shall be very glad to lay on the Table of the House a statement showing the items which have caused the increase in expenditure during the period mentioned.

On Question, Motion (amended by the deletion of Nos. 5 and 7) agreed to.

THE ADEN BOUNDARY.

*LORD REAY: My Lords, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is his intention to lay any Papers on the Table of the House on the subject of the negotiations with Turkey regarding the demarcation of the boundary between the vilayet of Yemen and the British sphere of influence to the north of Aden. Boundaries between Oriental states are, as a rule, left undetermined, and such a situation gives many openings to encroachment and dispute. I do not intend to go into the history of the various disputes which have arisen in recent years with regard to these boundaries. As between European Powers such a state of things is not tolerated, and it is therefore not unnatural that the Turkish Government itself proposed, I believe, in December, 1901, that the delimitation should take place of the boundary mentioned in my Question. We may therefore confidently expect that, as this delimitation has taken place at the request of the Turkish Government, that Government will respect it in future. As regards the territory on the British side of the boundary, some questions arise which I may, perhaps, be allowed to indicate, and upon which the noble Marquess may be able to throw some light. I should like to ask, in the first place, whether this new boundary extends our sphere of influence. I suppose it does not. I also suppose that the boundary is considered by both Governments to be a definite and final boundary, and that we shall make it clear to the tribes that it is not elastic. Can the noble Marquess give us any information concerning the attitude of the tribes towards this limitation of their migratory propensities? By the Convention I take it that we incur a certain amount of responsibility for their good behaviour, and that in the event of excursions or incursions of a tribe into Turkish territory the Turkish Government would have a right to ask us for redress. I wish, further, to inquire whether it is proposed to take any steps to guard the new boundary, and whether, with a view to this, there is any intention of increasing the garrison of Aden? The position of Aden is of the utmost importance, and it is on that ground that it seems to me most undesirable, unless clear evidence is forthcoming, to extend our responsibilities beyond the zone which we require to make us perfectly secure in Aden itself, so that we may concentrate all our strength on this outpost of our Eastern dominions. My friend the noble Marquess has such an intimate knowledge of the Aden Administration that I am sure he will appreciate the motives which prompt me to put the Question standing in my name. I hope he will be able to communicate some Papers to show what the results of the Convention are likely to be.

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† See page 283.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of LANSDOWNE): My Lords, I can well understand that my noble friend, as an ex-Governor of Bombay, should take an interest in the affairs of Aden and the adjoining tribes. Our interest in these tribes, and our desire to exert influence over them, is not of recent origin. Nor has our right to exert an influence of the kind ever, to the best of my belief, been seriously challenged by the Turkish Government. It is quite true that in 1873, when, after an interval of 240 years, the Turks reoccupied the province of Yemen, they made some attempt to revive ancient claims of sovereignty over these tribes; but the attempt was not seriously pressed. I may say with confidence that our recent discussions have had reference not to the *status* of the tribes so much as to the boundaries in which their territories were included. The question of the position of the tribes was disposed of in 1873, when a British force was sent to the assistance of the Chief of Lahej, who had been threatened by another local chief, assisted by Turkish troops. After the authority of the Chief of Lahej had been reasserted, a declaration was made by our Ambassador at Constantinople that His Majesty's Government would not tolerate the interference of the Ottoman authorities in the territories of the nine tribes; and that declaration has been more than once repeated. But, my Lords, that declaration did not put a stop to local intrigues; and in 1885 there were considerable Turkish encroachments on the territory of the Amiri tribe. On that occasion, or soon afterwards, the village of Jalela, which commands the main road through that country, and which is eight or nine miles from the tribal border, was occupied by the Turks. The British Government thought it necessary to enter a formal protest, and to warn the Turkish Government that that occupation would not be permanently acquiesced in. In 1900 another incident arose: a Turkish subject occupied the fort of Ad-areja within the territory of one of the nine tribes; and it became necessary to send a British force to expel the intruders. Then followed various troubles upon the Amiri border, and in 1901 the Turkish Government of their own accord proposed to us that the limits of the nine tribes should be delimited by a Joint Commission. We had been on the point of making the same proposal ourselves, and we therefore gladly fell in with the view of the Turkish Government.

But no sooner had the Commission been appointed than the local encroachments began again; and in the year 1901 other points within the tribal territory were occupied by the Turks. The post at Jalela was reinforced, and a military cordon was drawn across the country in such a way as to render it virtually impossible for the work of delimitation to proceed. These occurrences led to considerable effervescence among the tribes, so much so that it became unsafe to move about the district, and in several cases persons connected with the British Commission were actually fired on. I mention all this to show how absolutely necessary it became that this question of the true limits of the tribal country should be once and for all authoritatively decided. In these circumstances we felt it to be our duty to press the Turkish Government to withdraw their troops without the boundary of the tribal territory, and to restore the Amiri Chief, who had been in a special degree threatened by those usurpations, to his rightful position. For this purpose it was necessary to send up into the country a considerable military force. During the greater part of last year negotiations proceeded, of which the peculiar feature was this—that we received from the Turkish Government assurances which were upon the whole satisfactory; while most unfortunately the instructions which we had reason to believe were issued from Constantinople either did not reach the Turkish local authorities, or, if they did reach them, were disregarded. It became necessary to bring these matters seriously to the attention of the Turkish Government; and I am glad to say that within the last few days we have received information that the Turkish troops have been withdrawn from the tribal territory, that orders have been given for the commencement of the work of delimitation, and that it is now actually proceeding on the Amiri border.

As to my noble friend's inquiry whether the boundary which the Commission will lay down will be a final and definitive one, it is our intention that it should be final and definitive, and we anticipate that it will be respected. The Turkish Government themselves asked for this delimitation, and it is only fair to suppose that they will respect the boundary which will result from the work of the Commission. At any rate, it is our intention that it shall be respected. With regard to the attitude of the tribes themselves, some of them, undoubtedly, are much relieved at the departure of the Turkish troops, and have signified their satisfaction in the most unmistakable terms. I am bound to say, however, with regard to some of the tribes, that the events of the last few years have so unsettled them—they have been in such doubt as to the outcome of this controversy—that it would not be surprising to find that for a time they remained in a somewhat perturbed state. With regard to our responsibility for these territories, I do not see why what has taken place should make any difference in those responsibilities. We have never desired to interfere with the internal and domestic affairs of the tribes. On the other hand, we have throughout made it perfectly plain that we should not tolerate the interference of any other Power with them. With regard to the Aden garrison, we have been obliged to increase it considerably in view of the state of unrest which arose in the district; but I feel confident, although I have no authority from my military advisers to say so, that when the country settles down it will be possible largely to reduce the force now upon the spot. As to laying Papers on the Table, I do not think it would be desirable while the delimitation is still proceeding, and while we are still in negotiation with the Turkish Government, to do so. At a later date I may be able to supply my noble friend with some information of the kind he desires; but I am sure that he will not differ from me when I say that, as this controversy has at last a prospect of being amicably disposed of, it would not be desirable to publish documents which might have the effect of reviving the acuter stages of the discussion—stages which, as far as we are concerned, we would gladly allow to be forgotten.

HOUSE OF LORDS OFFICES.

First Report from the Select Committee considered (according to Order), and agreed to.

STATUTE LAW REVISION (SCOTLAND BILL) [H.L.].

A Bill for further promoting the revision of the Statute Law by repealing enactments which have ceased to be in force or have become unnecessary, was presented by the LORD CHANCELLOR; read 1^a; and to be printed. (No. 28.)

House adjourned at Five o'clock, to Monday the 27th of April next, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 30*th March*, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS.

The Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of Ways and Means.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order No. 62 has been complied with, viz. :—

Highland and Invergarry and Fort Augustus Railway Companies.

Harrow Road and Paddington Tramways Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 63 COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order No. 63 has been complied with, viz :—

Romford and District Tramways Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

PRIVATE BILLS (PETITION FOR ADDITIONAL PROVISION) (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for additional Provision in the following Bill, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz :—

Grindleford, Baslow, and Bakewell Railway Bill.

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

East Ardsley Gas Bill; Winchester Water and Gas Bill, as amended, considered; to be read the third time.

South Yorkshire Joint Railways Bill; West Cumberland Electric Tramways Bill, read a second time, and committed.

Woolwich Borough Council Bill (by Order), read a second time, and committed.

Nantwich Urban District Council Bill [Lords], read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

Burgess Hill and St. John's Common Gas Bill, reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Broadstairs Gas Bill, reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table.

Market Drayton Gas Bill; Ipswich Gas Bill; Stoke Newington Borough Council Bill; Newcastle-upon-Tyne Electric Supply Bill, reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP B).

Mr. TENNANT reported from the Committee on Group B of Private Bills; That, at the meeting of the Committee this day, a letter was received from Mr. Osmond Williams, one of the Members of the said Committee, stating that he was unable, on account of illness, to attend the Committee that day.

Report to lie upon the Table.

Western Trust Bill [Lords]; Old Bridewell Burying Ground Bill [Lords]; Plymouth and Stonehouse Gas Bill [Lords]; Queensland Investment and Land Mortgage Bill [Lords], read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act for enabling the Western Trust, Limited, to re-arrange its capital; and to provide for the extinction of its B shares and for issuing ordinary shares in lieu thereof; and for altering the memorandum and articles of association of the Company; and for other purposes." [Western Trust Bill [Lords].]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for removing certain restrictions on the user of the Old Bridewell Burying Ground." [Old Bridewell Burying Ground Bill [Lords].]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confer further powers on the Plymouth and Stonehouse Gas Light and Coke Company; and for other purposes." [Plymouth and Stonehouse Gas Bill [Lords].]

And also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for enabling the Queensland Investment and Land Mortgage Company, Limited, to pay off capital paid in advance of calls; and for other purposes." [Queensland Investment and Land Mortgage Bill [Lords].]

PETITIONS.

APPALACHARULU, BANDARN.

Petition of Bandarn Appalacharulu, for inquiry into his case; to lie upon the Table.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Ashton-under-Lyne; Blackburn; Brighouse; Bootle; and Derby; to lie upon the Table.

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Arbroath, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

GROCERS' LICENCES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Glasgow, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LAND VALUES ASSESSMENT AND RATING BILL.

Petition from Camberwell, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.

Petitions against establishment: from Arbroath; Aberdeen; Bo'ness; Glasgow; Dysart; Kirkcaldy; and Carnoustie; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.

Petitions against: from Hastings; and Chichester; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petition from Wolverhampton, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY BOROUGH OF HUDDERSFIELD).

Copy presented, of Order made by the Council of the County Borough of Huddersfield altering certain Polling Districts in the Borough [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

POLLING DISTRICTS (BOROUGH OF READING).

Copy presented, of Order made by the Council of the Borough of Reading altering certain Polling Districts in the Borough [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

METROPOLITAN CATTLE MARKET.

Accounts presented, for the year 1902, with an account of extraordinary works executed other than the general repairs for the same period [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

PORT NESS HARBOUR, ISLAND OF LEWIS.

Copy presented, of Correspondence and Report of Mr. William Shield, M.I.C.E., F.R.S.E., in regard to the condition of the Harbour of Port Ness, Island of Lewis [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Eighth Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Scotland, 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIA (PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT).

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 27th March; *Sir Seymour King*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 98.]

SUGAR CONVENTION (COMMERCIAL, No. 2, 1903).

Copy presented, of Correspondence respecting the Ratification of the Sugar Convention. Signed at Brussels, 5th March, 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

SUGAR-PRODUCING COUNTRIES (COMMERCIAL, No. 3, 1903).

Copy presented, of List of Countries engaged in the Production of Sugar, together with value of Exports from the United Kingdom to each of the said Countries for each of the last five years, etc. [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

Paper laid upon the Table by the Clerk of the House—

SOANE'S MUSEUM.

Copy of Statement of the Funds of the Museum of the late Sir John Soane on 5th January, 1903 [by Act].

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Transfer of Fisheries Department from Board of Trade to Board of Agriculture.

MR. RIGG (Westmoreland, Appleby): To ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether it is contemplated to transfer the Fisheries Department from the Board of Trade to the Board of Agriculture; and, if so, when the transfer will take place.

(*Answered by Mr. A. J. Balfour.*) The change requires legislation and a Bill will be introduced.

Royal Marines—Walmer and Eastney Depôts.

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what is the total annual cost of the Marine depôts at Walmer and Eastney; what is the average number of recruits trained annually at these depôts; and what is the estimated daily cost per recruit (excluding pay and expenses unconnected with the training of recruits.)

(*Answered by Mr. Arnold-Forster.*) The annual cost of the Royal Marine depôt at Deal is £32,724. The annual cost of the Royal Marine Artillery depôt at Eastney cannot be differentiated from the cost of the whole of the division, to which the recruits were attached as a temporary measure whilst the depôt at Deal was full. The average number of recruits trained annually during the last three years at Walmer is 1,330, and at Eastney 370. The estimated daily cost for Royal Marine Light Infantry recruits is 1s. 4d.

Relief Drafts from Devonport.

MR. LOCKIE (Devonport): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he will make arrangements that relief drafts from Devonport shall join the transport there instead of being sent to Chatham.

(*Answered by Mr. Arnold-Forster.*) The arrangements in any particular case are those which it is found practicable to make with the company in whose vessel the passages are engaged. When the number of men who would embark from Devonport is small it is not practicable to arrange for a ship, starting from London and not calling at Plymouth in her regular course, to call there specially.

Postal Service at Clashganny Mills.

MR. HAMMOND (Carlow): To ask the Postmaster-General is he aware that the early post arrives at Borris at 6 a.m. and at Graigue, county Kilkenny, at 7 a.m. but that letters are not delivered at Clashganny Mills, which are midway between these two towns, until 11.20 a.m.; and will he arrange for a more early delivery at the latter district.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) I am making inquiry as to the possibility of affording an earlier delivery of letters at Clashganny Mills, and I will communicate the result to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Assessment of Land Tax.

MR. TALBOT (Oxford University): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to a complaint made by the Rector of Aldingham, in the county of Lancaster, that the land tax upon his tithe rent charge had been increased by 12 per cent. from the amount previously charged, the reason assigned being that other properties in the same parish had decreased in value; will he say whether it is in accordance with the practice of the Commissioners to increase the rating upon one property in order to supply the deficiency upon others; and what steps will be taken to give redress in this case.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) The net quota of land tax for a parish is a fixed sum, and the proportion payable by any given individual may vary according to the basis of assessment adopted by the local Commissioners of land tax from time to time. In the parishes referred to in the Question the local Commissioners have this year adopted for the first time as the basis of assessment the rateable value for poor rate purposes. This basis is, in the opinion of the Board of Inland Revenue, the fairest that can be adopted.

Postal Service at Swinford.

MR. O'KELLY (Mayo, N.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been directed to a memorial from the Swinford District Council and inhabitants of the town of Swinford regarding the despatch and arrival of mails; and, if so, will he say whether he can take any steps to remedy the alleged grievances.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) I have received the memorial referred to by the hon. Member, and I have for some time had under consideration the question of improving the postal service at Swinford. I will communicate my decision to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Postal Facilities at Falmouth.

MR. HORNIMAN (Penryn and Falmouth): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that in order to be in time for the first delivery in London, letters at Falmouth must be posted at the Central Office not later than 4.25 in the afternoon; and whether, having regard to the importance of this place as a port of call, he will make inquiries with a view of affording a later despatch.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) The time for posting at Falmouth letters intended to be included in the first delivery in London on the following morning is correctly stated by the hon. Member, and I regret that the time cannot be extended. I do not know whether the hon. Member is aware that under present arrangements letters posted at Falmouth as late as 8.30 p.m. are included in the second delivery in London on the following morning.

Improved Postal Facilities at Carrigan, County Cavan.

MR. M'GOVERN (Cavan, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been directed to the inconvenience caused in the Carrigan post office district, in the county of Cavan, by the fact that no reply can be sent to a letter on the day of its receipt out of this postal district; and will he consider the advisability of making arrangements that the same messenger could bring the letters posted at Carrigan and Loughduff to Ballinagh, and of erecting a couple of letter boxes in the districts remote from Carrigan for the convenience of people in the locality.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) As the hon. Member was informed in a letter addressed to him on the 22nd of July last, it was found that the cost of the postal service in the Carrigan district then represented practically the whole of the postage from the correspondence. Unless the circumstances have materially changed, I should not be justified in incurring increased expenditure for the purpose of providing additional postal facilities at Carrigan, but I will make inquiry with the view of ascertaining whether it is now possible to effect any of the improvements desired by the hon. Member, and I will let him know the result as soon as possible.

Granagh Postal Service.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General if he has yet inquired into the postal service in the Granagh district, in the county of Limerick, with a view to its improvement; and, if so, will he state his decision in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) I have just completed my inquiries on this subject arising out of the memorial from the Granagh Co-operative Dairy Society, which the hon. Member forwarded on the 24th ultimo. I find that it can be arranged to send correspondence for Granagh, as desired, by way of Ballingarry instead of by way of Ballinleeny. The delivery will then take place about an hour and a half earlier than at present, and a letter box will be placed at Granagh with a collection at 3.45 p.m. on weekdays. The circumstances do not, however, warrant the cost of affording a delivery or collection on Sundays. I propose to carry out these changes.

International Conference on Maritime Law.

MR. RUNCIMAN (Dewsbury): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with regard to the draft treaties relating to the law of collision and salvage at sea, based on suggestions made at conferences of shipowners, lawyers, underwriters, and merchants organised by the Comité Maritime International at Antwerp 1898, London 1899, Paris 1900, and Hamburg 1902, received from the Belgian Government, and the suggestion that these draft treaties should be submitted to a diplomatic conference for consideration, if he will state what action is to be taken by the Government; and what reply has been made to the Belgian Government.

(*Answered by Lord Cranborne.*) The matter is still under consideration by His Majesty's Government.

Dungarvan Light.

MR. O'SHEE (Waterford, W.): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he will state whether the sectoring of Dungarvan Light, Baltinacourty Point, is now correctly laid off on the Admiralty chart, Winslade to Wexford, which is corrected up to April, 1902.

(*Answered by Mr. Arnold - Forster.*) Conflicting information has been received regarding the exact bearings of the sectors of Dungarvan Light, and it is doubtful whether the chart referred to, or No. 2,017, on which they are shown slightly different, is correct. The discrepancy does not affect navigation.

Education Act—Schemes submitted for approval to the Board of Education.

MR. HUMPHREYS-OWEN (Montgomery): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education, whether, having regard to the fact that informal suggestions by the Board of Education to County Councils as to the drafting of schemes under The Education Act, 1902, have been accepted by some councils as authoritative directions, the Board will in future, after giving publicity to any proposed scheme, and before the stage of final approval, give consideration to any objection to it, notwithstanding any informal approval which may previously have been given by the Board; and will he state what steps the Board will take for the purpose of making clear to local education authorities that suggestions previous to publication are not final, and of securing that due notice and opportunity for making objections shall be given before the approval of any scheme.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) The object of publication is to give opportunity for making objections to the scheme thus published. It has been made abundantly clear to local authorities that the Board cannot approve until after the period of publication has expired, and that they are bound to pay attention to objections which may be lodged during that period.

Working of Irish Poor Law—Suggested Royal Commission.

DR. THOMPSON (Monaghan, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will consent to the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the grievances of the Irish Poor Law medical service, and also into the question of the administration of the Poor Law, the condition of the workhouses, and the treatment and management of the poor in these institutions.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The Government is about to appoint a Commission to consider the general question of the amalgamation of unions and the amelioration of the condition of all classes of destitute poor in workhouses. The grievance of the Irish Poor Law medical officers, which can only be remedied at the ratepayers' expense, is another matter, and any amendment of the law on this subject would be highly contentious. I should, therefore, be sorry to see it brought within the scope of a Commission through which it is hoped to ensure a more economical administration of the Poor Law.

Proposed New Road over Knockalla Mountain.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will consider the advisability of giving a grant out of the Marine Works Act for the construction of the proposed new road over the Knockalla Mountain, towards which the Congested Districts Board have already promised a grant of £1,000.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The contribution referred to in the second part of the Question was offered in 1898, but lapsed because of the non-fulfilment of the condition upon which it was promised. The Board has no funds at present to enable it to renew the offer. I cannot undertake to assist the project out of the moneys provided by the Marine Works Act.

Army Canteens Departmental Committee—Report.

MR. NOLAN (Louth, S.): To ask the Secretary of State for War if the Departmental Committee on Army Canteens has yet presented its Report; and, if so, at what date it is proposed to circulate it.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) This Committee has reported, but it has not been decided to publish the Report.

Report on Officers Sent Home from South Africa.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can arrange that a copy of the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the causes of various officers being called upon to resign their commissions and who were sent home from South Africa may be given to each individual officer; and whether, in view of the fact that Mr. A. E. Gilmore, of the Imperial Yeomanry (unattached), was acquitted before the Committee of bad horsemanship, which was the reason given him for being sent home, he will grant him the same privilege as other officers, namely, the honorary rank of lieutenant in the Army with permission to wear the uniform of the regiment.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) The Report of this Committee was strictly confidential and cannot therefore be communicated in the manner suggested. As regards Second-Lieutenant Gilmore, he is not eligible for the grant of equivalent Army rank and permission to wear the uniform because he did not serve for six months in South Africa. His case was fully considered at the time, and it was decided to give him the medal and gratuity, but it is not proposed to take any further action in the matter.

Sharfleet (Medway) Fishery—Compensation for Erection of a Pier.

SIR JOSEPH DIMSDALE (London): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that the War Office Authorities in the year 1899 erected a pier for the landing of troops, ammunition, etc., from the mainland of Burntwick Island, and have refused to the lessee of the Sharfleet (Medway) Fishery any award for damages to the oyster fishery, and for interference with rights and privileges under his lease, he will allow the landlords and lessee to submit their case to a fully-qualified tribunal with a view of securing compensation for their alleged losses.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) In the first place, it is not admitted that any damage was done to the fishery in question by the erection of the pier. In the second place, those concerned have been officially informed that if at any time the Rochester Fishery Board can prove any such damage, the Secretary of State for War will then be prepared to discuss the question of compensation to the board or to persons claiming under them. No representations, however, have been received from the board to this effect since the communication in question.

Rules of procedure for Military Courts.

Colonel WELBY (Taunton): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether since the debate on 22nd April, 1901, new Rules of Procedure for Military Courts of Inquiry were promulgated; and, if so, will he say where they are to be found.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) These rules were promulgated by Special Army Order of 10th February, 1902, and will be found in Army Order 88 of 1902.

Telegraphic Communication between Cocos Islands and Ceylon.

Sir EDWARD SASSOON (Hythe): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if any steps are being taken to connect Cocos Islands and Ceylon by means of a spur cable; and, if not, will he state whether an early decision in conjunction with the India Office in relation thereto is likely to be reached.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) I have received the views of the Government of India, and am now in communication with the Treasury on the expediency of making such a line or an alternative line or lines.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

New Recruiting Regulations.

Major SEELY (Isle of Wight): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the new conditions of recruiting regarding character and physique have been issued, and will he state the precise terms of the order.

The SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford): It was notified on February 27th that no recruits for Infantry should now be enlisted under the standard of age, height, or chest measurement. The raising of the standard for other arms was carried out by Army Order of March 1st. As regards character I cannot give the whole of the instructions, but the first and main instruction is that no man is to be accepted for any branch of the Regular Army, or Militia, who cannot produce a satisfactory reference as to his character and antecedents.

British Garrisons Abroad.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE (Bristol, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what are the total garrisons at Mauritius, Hong-Kong, and Singapore, and what are the numbers of British and Native troops stationed respectively at each of these.

Mr. BRODRICK: The hon. Member will find the information he requires on page 22 of the Army Estimates, 1903–4.

Artillery Equipment.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, how many patterns there are in England and India for mountain and field guns and for heavy ordnance; and what steps are being taken to make all guns, mountain, field, and heavy guns, of identical calibre in both Great Britain, India, and the Colonies.

Mr. BRODRICK: As regards mountain-guns, after 1st April there will be no mountain batteries elsewhere than in India. The field batteries in India and at home are all 15-pounder breech-loading guns, except in the case of fifteen batteries at home, which are armed with the 15-pounder quick-firing gun. Field howitzer batteries are armed with the 5-inch howitzer field-guns. The heavy guns in India and Great Britain are of different calibres, but the importance of identical calibre is fully recognised, and as guns are replaced every effort will be made to assimilate them.

*Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): Has the decision as to mountain batteries been previously announced?

Mr. BRODRICK: I do not know It is only a question of one or two batteries.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE: When will the conversion be accomplished?

MR. BRODRICK: It will be done gradually.

Linked Battalion System.

*MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what military stations outside the United Kingdom are now reckoned as home stations, or at which troops now serving are reckoned as on the home establishment.

*MR. BRODRICK: Under the present system, whenever circumstances require that more than the normal number of battalions should be abroad, battalions on the home roster have to be sent abroad out of their turn on what is called "short tour," and these are sent to stations where the qualifications of service are the same as at home; they are considered as temporarily detached from the home establishment. At present there are no battalions on short tour except in South Africa.

*MR. ARTHUR LEE: Is not this the inevitable result of the linked battalion system?

MR. BRODRICK: All battalions are maintained at home in the same proportion as those abroad, but if the exigencies of the public service require it, some of the home battalions are temporarily sent abroad.

Officers' Examinations in the United States Army.

*MR. ARTHUR LEE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the new regulations for examining officers for promotion in the United States Army, and particularly to the fact that Members of the Examining Board are sworn faithfully and impartially to examine and report upon the officer about to be examined; and whether, with a view to assisting and strengthening the hands of officers detailed to examine or report upon their comrades, he will consider the advisability of introducing a similar provision into his new regulations for examination and promotion.

MR. BRODRICK: I have seen the proviso in the regulations mentioned. In view of the existing certificate signed by the Examining Board the alteration suggested does not at present commend itself to my Military Advisers.

Irish Ordnance Workshops — Labourers' Wages.

MR. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will extend his inquiry into the wages paid to ordnance workers in English dockyards to the wages paid to the labourers employed in ordnance workshops in Ireland.

MR. BRODRICK: The case of Ireland will be considered with others.

Army Veterinary Department Inquiry.

MR. WILLIAM M'KILLOP (Sligo, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state when the Committee of Inquiry into the Army Veterinary Department held its first Sitting; and when the Committee may be expected to report.

MR. BRODRICK: This Committee first met on 28th November. I am not yet in a position to say when the Report will be completed.

Tenders for Officers' Uniform.

MR. NANNETTI: I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether any tenders for officers' uniforms, etc., for cash prices have been received from manufacturers in Ireland; whether any manufacturers from that country have been placed on the list selected by the War Office; and, if not, whether steps will be taken to secure for such manufacturers a portion of the orders for officers' uniforms, etc., serving in Ireland.

MR. BRODRICK: Price lists are being received from the firms concerned. I am not, therefore, in a position to make any further statement at present.

GENERAL LAURIE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest): Are the prices modified as the uniform is changed from time to time?

MR. BRODRICK: I cannot say; I hope there are not many changes to make a modification necessary.

Royal Marines—Terms of Enlistment.

MR. KEARLEY (Devonport): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he is aware that in the Royal Marines a man who purchases his discharge after some years of service and rejoins later is unable to count his former service towards the completion of his full term of twenty-one years, and that a contrary system prevails in the Army and Navy; and, if so, will he consider the desirability of giving similar treatment to the Royal Marine Corps in this respect.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER, Belfast, W.): The point referred to in the hon. Member's Question has recently been under consideration with a view to assimilating the Royal Marine Regulations to those governing the Royal Navy, and in future seamen or Marines who have left the service, will, on re-entry in any capacity, be permitted to count the whole of their previous time, provided that the break in their service has not exceeded five years.

Prize-Firing in the Navy.

MR. KEARLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he will grant a Return of the annual prize-firing results of the Navy for the past three years.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: It is not considered desirable to publish these results in the form of a Return, for the reasons stated in my reply to the hon. Member for Chester on the 17th December last.†

Sokoto Expedition.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any expedition has been despatched from Kano, in North Nigeria, to Sokoto; and, if so, will he state how many men it consisted of, and has any telegraphic report been forwarded concerning it by Sir F. Lugard; and, if so, will he state its nature.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): The following telegram, dated Sokoto, March 19, has been received from Sir Frederick Lugard:—"Sokoto occupied March 15th after feeble resistance. Sultan and chiefs fled. I arrived this morning Hope to effect full settlement early. Wazeri and Sultan's brother returned to-day with many followers. I am breaking up expeditionary force. General Kemball leaves for Zungeru day after to-morrow. Lagos and Southern Nigeria reserves returning home. All well. Boundary Commissioners are here." Sir Frederick Lugard has not stated how many men the force despatched from Kano to Sokoto consisted of, but the force which occupied Kano consisted of 839 of all ranks. I think the House will feel that this most important expedition has been admirably carried out.

Repatriation in South Africa.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, Chelmsford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been directed to the prices at which stores of all kinds are being sold by the military authorities in the Transvaal; and whether, seeing that similar stores are being brought by the Repatriation Committee from England, he will consider the advisability of transferring these stores from one department to the other.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Arrangements have been made whereby the Transvaal Government takes over all the stores which it requires for repatriation purposes from the military authorities. Nothing is sold by the military authorities to the general public of which the civil Government has not had the refusal.

Sugar and Cotton Plantations in the West Indies.

MR. RUNCIMAN (Dewsbury): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has any official reports showing that sugar planters in some of the West Indian Islands are taking to the cultivation of cotton in place of sugar; and, if so, will he say in which islands this change is in progress; and how many estates are affected.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The hon. Member will find full information on the subject in the publications of the Imperial

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxvi., 1495.

Department of Agriculture for the West Indies, published by Messrs. Dulan and Company, 37, Soho Square, and especially in the publication entitled "Information relating to Cotton Cultivation in the West Indies, 1903." It contains an account of experiments that are being made to cultivate cotton in localities where sugar growing cannot possibly be carried on at a profit.

Indian Import Duties.

MR. EMMOTT (Oldham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, in view of the fact that the Indian Budget for 1903–4 shows a surplus of £948,700, after the reduction of the Salt Tax and the change in the incidence of the Income Tax, and that the amount estimated to be received from the Import Duty and the Excise Duty on cotton goods in the Estimates of 1902–3 was £767,000, and seeing that the final accounts for the four years 1898–9 to 1901–2, and the revised Estimates for 1902–3 show an actual surplus for the five years of £14,700,000, and of £9,800,000 over the Budget Estimates of the same period, and that he stated to a deputation on 11th December, 1895, that if an equilibrium could be established between Indian expenditure and revenue so that these taxes on cotton goods could be dispensed with, they were the first taxes that should be dealt with, he will now consider the advisability of dispensing with these taxes.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): As I stated in answer to a similar Question on 12th March,[†] I cannot hold out any hope at present of reducing the Customs duties now in force in India. The Government of India have gone as far as they consider prudent at present in remitting taxation. Since 1895 the duty on woven cotton goods has been reduced from 5 per cent. to 3½ per cent., the duty on yarns entirely taken off, and the countervailing excise duty on cotton goods woven in Indian power mills has been re-adjusted so as to prevent the import duty from having a protective effect. These changes materially modify the character, incidence and scope of the duties existing in 1895.

Sugar Cane Cultivation in India.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether there has been any increase in the area under sugar cane in the united provinces of India since the passing of the Act for countervailing foreign bounty-fed sugar imported into India; and what was the area under cultivation last year as compared with the year 1898–9.

*LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: The answer to the first part of the Question is in the negative. The aggregate area under sugar cane in the provinces in which this crop is of importance was 2,502,000 acres in 1898–9, and 2,206,000 acres in 1901–2. Since 1898–9 the seasons have been so abnormal, owing to shortage of rain, that no reliable conclusions can be drawn from the figures.

India—Scientific Research.

MR. SCHWANN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, whether he will state what is the present position of Mr. Jomsetjee N. Tata's scheme for a scientific research institution in India; what support has been given to the scheme by the Government of India; and whether the correspondence, including Sir W. Ramsay's Report, will be placed before Parliament.

*LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: I understand that Mr. Tata's scheme for a scientific research institution is, for the time being, in abeyance. I do not propose to publish any correspondence on the subject.

Administration of Justice in Cachar.

MR. SCHWANN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that Mr. Bain, a tea-planter of Cachar, who was lately committed for trial on a charge of beating to death a coolie who had absconded from his garden, was tried before a jury of five Europeans belonging to his own district, and was found guilty of causing simple hurt only; and whether, seeing that the jury consisted of tea-planters and persons connected with the tea industry, he will consider the desirability of transferring such cases for trial to a district other than that in which the accused resides, in order that they may be tried before an independent tribunal, and of arranging for a re-trial of this case.

[†] See (4) *Debates*, cxix., 562.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: I have seen a report in the newspapers of the result of the trial referred to. The trial was held before a Sessions Judge and a jury; and if the Judge had disagreed with the jury's verdict it was open to him to submit the case to the High Court, who could have passed any sentence which they considered justified by the facts which they found to be proved. It was further open to the Government, if they thought fit, to move the High Court to call for the record; and if that Court thought the verdict erroneous, owing to a misdirection by the Judge, or to a misunderstanding on the part of the jury of the law as laid down by him, it could deal with the case as it thought proper. The Government can also move the High Court to order the transfer to another district. This being the law, I see no necessity for taking action as suggested in the Question. I have no power to arrange for a re-trial of the case.

North Africa—Spheres of Influence.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether His Majesty's Government have come to an understanding with France and Italy in reference to spheres of influence in North Africa.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord CRANBORNE, Rochester): The answer is in the negative.

Macedonian Disturbances.

MR. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether His Majesty's Government will direct one of their consular representatives in the near East to visit the disturbed districts in Macedonia, as was recently done by the Russian Vice-Consul at Philippopolis, and report upon the condition of the Christian subjects of the Porte within that province.

LORD CRANBORNE: The British Vice-Consul at Uscub, and the officer recently appointed to Monastir, are very well situated for obtaining accurate information from the disturbed districts. Moreover, our Consul-General at Salonica has been making detailed inquiry into some of the worst cases which have attracted public attention, the results of which will be laid before Parliament. In order to avoid dangerous excitement it has been considered undesirable in the present state of the country to send an officer specially to visit places where disturbances have occurred. But the matter has the attention of His Majesty's ambassador at Constantinople, and will be reconsidered if circumstances should seem to require it.

Licence Refusals at Brewster Sessions.

MR. COHEN (Islington, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in the promised Return of the Licences refused at the last Brewster Sessions, he will add a statement showing the number of years during which the licence had been held by the respective licensees.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. AKERS DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): No, Sir; to adopt the hon. Member's suggestion would, even if possible, involve great and undesirable delay in the issue of the Return. Large numbers of answers to the Return, as ordered by the House, have already come in; and the matter is being prepared for publication at the earliest moment.

Tredegar Magistracy and the Ebbw Vale Coal and Iron Company.

MR. BELL (Derby): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the action of an official of the Ebbw Vale Coal and Iron Company in writing letters to some of the magistrates and the magistrates' clerk at the Tredegar Police Court, and asking the latter to constitute a certain bench to try a case in which the Company were prosecuting workmen for breach of contract; and whether he proposes to take any steps to prevent the recurrence of similar incidents.

*MR. AKERS DOUGLAS: Both from the account of the incident which the hon. Member was good enough to send me and from inquiries I have made of the magistrates, I think the magistrates and their clerk dealt with the case in a way that showed clearly their sense of the impropriety of the communication which had been addressed to them, and which should effectively prevent the recurrence of any such incident. I certainly agree with them, though there are no steps which it lies in my power to take. I may add that I understand that the Manager of the Company has now stated that the communication was entirely unauthorised, expressed his regret that an official of the Company should have made it, and offered an unqualified apology.

Transmission of Marconi's Messages over Public Wires.

SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether, in view of the fact that the Admiralty have come to an arrangement for the adoption of Marconi's system of wireless telegraphy, he will state what hindrance there is, if any, to the Telegraph Department giving the same facilities for transmitting marconigrams over the public wires as are given to the cable companies; and can he state the present position of the negotiations.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, Worcestershire, E.): I am prepared, on proof to my satisfaction that the Company are in a position to deal satisfactorily with the business handed to them, and subject to their compliance with certain conditions required in the public interest, to give them the necessary facilities for the transmission of telegrams to and from their Poldhu Station. I am in communication with the Company and other Departments on the subject.

The Crew of the "Princess Alexandra."

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will say whether any of the officers and crew of the "Princess Alexandra" were on leave while that vessel was laid up at Liverpool; if so, how long did the leave last in each individual case; and whether they received wages and allowance while on leave; and, if so, how much of either wages or allowance, or of both.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds Central): I am informed by the Commissioners of Irish Lights that the Acting Commander, the Chief Officer, and the Chief Engineer of the "Princess Alexandra" each got one month's leave while that vessel was laid up at Liverpool, and received their regular rates of pay and victualling allowances. Each member of the crew had a fortnight's leave during February and March while the vessel was laid up, receiving wages and victualling allowances of fourteen shillings and threepence, and twelve shillings and threepence, respectively.

Beer Poisoning Commission's Report.

MAJOR RASCH: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board when the Beer Poisoning Commission Report will be presented. I beg also to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he will state when the Report of the Commission on Arsenical Poisoning in beer will be in the hands of Members.

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (MR. GRANT LAWSON, Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk): I am informed that the Commission will shortly finish taking evidence, and will then prepare their final report; but I cannot at present say when it will be presented.

MR. GROVES (Salford, S): May I ask if the hon. Gentleman, in view of the importance of getting a satisfactory assurance that the brewing materials are now pure, will advise the Commission to issue an interim report.

MR. J. GRANT LAWSON: No, Sir; that would be most unusual.

Hop Substitutes used in Brewing.

*DR. HUTCHINSON (Sussex, Rye): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the Treasury if the total amount of hop substitutes, 19,422 pounds, given in the recent Return of Brewers' Licences, is the total amount used in brewing; and whether substitutes that are added after the brewing is completed are included in this Return.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY (Mr. HAYES FISHER, Fulham): The Brewers' returns of Hop Substitutes, on which the figures in the Brewers' Licences Return are based, should include, and — so far as the Board of Inland Revenue are aware—do include, all hop substitutes, whether used in the actual process of brewing, or added to finished beer.

*MR. GROVES: May I point out that all these substitutes are also used by others than brewers.

Birdcage Walk.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the hon. Member for North Hunts, as representing the First Commissioner of Works, if he will state who is responsible for the state of disrepair into which the roadway known as Birdcage Walk has been allowed to fall; and whether immediate steps can be taken to put it in a satisfactory condition.

MR. AILWYN FELLOWES (Huntingdonshire, Ramsey): The Office of Works have decided to repair Birdcage Walk, and the work will last about a fortnight, commencing on Easter Tuesday.

Magisterial Differences.

MR. DUFFY (Galway, S.): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland if he will lay upon the Table of the House a Return showing the number of cases and the particulars therewith where magistrates sitting at petty sessions were equally divided, and where, notwithstanding this fact, two of the magistrates assumed the responsibility of sending the cases forward for trial.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. ATKINSON, Londonderry, N.): There are no materials available which would enable a Return, such as the hon. Member asks for, to be compiled.

Irish Fisheries—Counakilla Landing Place.

*MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state what assistance will be given by the Congested Districts Board to improve the landing place and beach at Counakilla, near Glenbeigh, County Kerry, to enable the small farmers of the district to draw sand for the improvement of their holdings; and can he state the date of the visit of the Board's engineer to report on the proposed improvement, and whether the opinion of inhabitants of the district was sought.

*THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): This matter has been recently before the Board. The decision arrived at was that any benefits that might accrue from carrying out the proposed work would not be commensurate with the expense entailed. The Board's engineer has not made an inspection.

Roads Landing Place.

*MR. BOLAND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the necessity of improving the landing facilities for fishermen at Roads, County Kerry, has been frequently brought to the notice of the Congested Districts Board in the course of the last few years; and can he state what action will be taken by the Board during the present financial year.

*MR. WYNDHAM: Considerable improvements will be carried out in the coming financial year.

Donegal Sub-Sheriff.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the sub-sheriff for the county of Donegal keeps no office in that county for the transaction of his official business, and that his office is in the city of Londonderry; and will he say what steps the Government intends to take in the matter.

*MR. WYNDHAM: Under Section 63 of 27 and 28 Vict. cap. 99, the under sheriff is required to have an office in the county town, or, with the approval of the chairman of the quarter sessions, in one of the quarter sessions towns, of the county. The under sheriff of Donegal, with the consent of the chairman, has his office in the quarter sessions town of Letterkenny.

Longford Union—Compensation Arbitration.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the cause of the delay in the issue of the arbitrator's award into the compensation to be paid to owners and occupiers of plots in Longford Union; and will he direct its issue forthwith.

*MR. WYNDHAM: The arbitrator's award has been lodged and the necessary action upon it will be taken forthwith. The delay has been caused by the persons interested.

Land Purchase Receipts.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether in any change in the arrangements for the receipt of payments of instalments due by purchasing tenants under the present Land Purchase Acts he will provide that tenants may have a receipt issued to them in respect of each payment.

*MR. WYNDHAM: It is not proposed to make any change in the existing arrangement under which a receipt is issued in respect of every instalment paid by tenant purchasers.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: Do I understand that a receipt is now issued?

*MR. WYNDHAM: Yes, Sir.

County Sligo Police Force.

MR. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether in view of the fact that the number of police at present stationed in the County Sligo does not exceed the number usually allocated to that county, he will reconsider the question of the chargeability of extra police to particular districts, with the view of affording relief to the ratepayers of such districts.

*MR. WYNDHAM: The fact is not as stated. The number of police at present stationed in the county is forty-three in excess of the full quota, and this excess represents the extra force chargeable. The question of withdrawing twenty-nine of these men is now under consideration.

Brown Hall Estate, County Mayo.

MR. JOHN O'DONNEL (Mayo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Irish Land Commission or the Congested Districts Board will take steps to take over the grazing lands on the Brown Hall Estate, near Balla, County Mayo, now about being disposed of by the Court of Chancery, which have been in the hands of a large grazier since 1900, for the purpose of enlarging the holdings of the agricultural tenants on the estate, who are now about purchasing their holdings.

The following Question also appeared on the Paper.

MR. JOHN O'DONNELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been directed to the efforts made by the tenants on the Brown Hall Estate, near Balla, County Mayo, to obtain turbary on several neighbouring estates; and to the fact that there are on that estate, and on a grazing tract, held for the past two years by a resident in the town of Balla, about fifteen acres of excellent turbary; and whether, seeing that the remainder of this estate is about being sold to the tenants by the Court of Chancery, and that the tenants are prepared to give the same amount of purchase money for the turbary and grazing lands as they are giving for their holdings, he can take steps to have these fifteen acres divided among them.

*Mr. WYNDHAM: This estate is administered in the Land Judge's Court. I have instituted inquiries in respect to the matters referred to in these Questions, which are in the name of the same hon. Member. These inquiries have not yet been completed, and I would ask him to postpone them for a day or two.

Lismore Union Mastership.

Mr. O'SHEE (Waterford, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Local Government Board will reconsider their decision in the case of Mr. George M'Donald, recently elected master of Lismore Union, by permitting the question of his fitness for the office to be determined by the manner of his discharge of the duties of the office during a period of probation; whether the Local Government Board will give the Board of Guardians a copy of the Questions in arithmetic submitted to Mr. M'Donald when examined, with his answers thereto; will he say what qualifications Mr. R. Kelly had as an examiner in arithmetic; and what official of the Board other than Mr. R. Kelly decided upon Mr. M'Donald's answers.

Mr. WYNDHAM: Legal proceedings have been instituted by the Local Government Board with the object of requiring the Guardians to appoint a properly qualified person to the position of workhouse master. The decision of the Board being thus subject to review by a judicial tribunal, the matter has passed out of its hands, and it cannot entertain the suggestions in the first and second inquiries. The decision arrived at was the decision of the Board. Mr. Kelly is a Barrister-at-law and a graduate of Trinity College.

Waterford New Bridge.

Mr. KENDAL O'BRIEN (Tipperary, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a resolution from the Tipperary County Council requesting the Lord Lieutenant to appoint an independent Commission, excluding local officials, to consider the memorial of the Corporation of Waterford as regards the proposed new bridge; and, if so, will he recommend the appointment of such a Commission.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The resolution was received, and the council was informed that it was proposed to reappoint the gentlemen who served at the late Commission. This has been done, and the Commission will commence its sittings to-morrow.

Objectionable Placards in Co. Clare—Police Action.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the police recently tore down some placards, issued in reference to a meeting of labourers in the neighbourhood of Newmarket-on-Fergus, County Clare, and if he will say whether this was done with his sanction.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The matter has not previously been brought to my notice. I am informed, however, that on the 20th instant the police removed some printed placards which referred to an individual as a "Tyrant." They removed one copy of another placard which was free from any such objectionable reference, and desisted from removing any more by order of the police sergeant.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: Will the right hon. Gentleman give instructions to the police in future not to remove placards of this nature?

Mr. WYNDHAM: I understand that the inspector, directly he saw the one placard that had been removed, ordered the men not to pull down any others of that nature.

Spit Bank Light, Queenstown.

Captain DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can say on what date the sectoring of the Spit Bank Light, Queenstown, was altered; and the date on which the notice to mariners on the subject was issued.

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: I am informed by the Commissioners of Irish

Lights that no alteration has taken place in the sectoring of the Spit Bank Light at Queenstown.

The Wreck of the "Manchester Merchant" in Dingle Bay.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been directed to a resolution of the Dingle District Council asking to have the wreck of the steamship "Manchester Merchant," now lying in Dingle Bay, removed; and whether, in view of the danger of this wreck to trading, and especially to fishing vessels in this bay, he will take steps to have the wreck removed immediately.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I have received a copy of the resolution of the Dingle District Council to which the hon. Member refers. The Board of Trade have no authority to take any steps for the removal of the wreck, but I am suggesting to the District Council, that as it is possible the wreck may be an obstruction to vessels going to or from Castlemaine Harbour, it might be well that they should communicate with the Harbour Authority.

Telegraphic Communication with Lanesborough.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that dissatisfaction exists in county Longford over the refusal of the Post Office authorities to grant a telegraph service to Lanesborough, although a similar service has been given to Killashee, three miles distant; and will he direct an extension of the line to be now made to Lanesborough.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The Post Office has not refused to grant a telegraph service to Lanesborough. On the contrary, an offer was made in 1898 to establish such a service under guarantee, and that offer was repeated in answer to a Question asked in this House by the hon. Member himself on the 22nd June, 1899. As to Killashee, a telegraph office there was offered under guarantee in 1899 and the offer was accepted. I am inquiring whether the terms of guarantee quoted for Lanesborough in 1899 still hold good, and will let the hon. Member know.

Promotion in the Dublin Sorting Office.

MR. NANNETTI: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he will consider the advisability of revoking the recent promotion of a second division clerk to a first-class assistant superintendentship in Dublin sorting office, or of giving an appointment in the Secretary's Office to an official drawn from the sorting office.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: No, Sir, I cannot adopt either of the hon. Member's suggestions.

Kiltimagh Mail Service.

MR. O'KELLY (Mayo, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he has received a memorial from the inhabitants of Kiltimagh praying for a better mail service; and whether, in the interests of merchants and business men generally, he will take steps to remedy the alleged grievance.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I have for some time had under consideration the question of affording a better postal service at Kiltimagh, and I hope soon to be in a position to effect some improvement.

Killorglin Mail Service.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he will make arrangements by which mails may be taken from the town of Killorglin by the 1.15 p.m. train daily by which Tralee is at the present time served, seeing that, with present arrangements, it is impossible for business men to reply by morning mail to letters received that morning.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I will make inquiry into the question of despatching a mail from Killorglin by the 1.15 p.m. train and I will communicate the result to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Irish Land Bill.

MR. LAMBERT (Devonshire, South Molton): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the maximum and minimum number of years purchase, including bonus, that an Irish landowner may receive on the first term rent and second term rent respectively under the provisions of the Irish Land Bill.

*MR. WYNDHAM: This question is of such importance, and a bare reply to it is so liable to misconception, that I must ask to preface my reply by two observations. (1) The total purchase price consists of two portions—viz , (a) the total amount advanced in respect of the several purchase annuities and perpetual rent-charges which the purchasers individually agree to pay, and (b) the percentage from the Aid Fund Grant, which is calculated on that total amount by an inverse graduation. (2) Of that total purchase price a portion, including the percentage, goes absolutely to the vendor, the remainder is paid to him after other interests and claims have been met. With that explanation the answer is: First-term rent of £100: (a) maximum £2,894·55, nearly twenty-nine years; (b) minimum £1,982·40, nearly twenty years. Second-term rent of £100: (c) maximum £3,256·8, about thirty-two and a half years; (d) minimum £2,313·15, just over twenty-three years.

MR. LAMBERT asked if the bonus was included.

*MR. WYNDHAM: Yes. I have stated that the purchase consists of two portions, that which comes from the tenants and that which is the percentage amount of the Aid Grant Fund. The figures I have given are the result of the two added together.

MR. EMMOTT: That is the bonus calculated at the highest rate?

*MR. WYNDHAM: Certainly. But it would be more proper to say the amount arrived at in respect of the instalments paid by the tenants and the bonus.

*MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): The right hon. Gentleman said as to distribution of purchase price that one portion of it goes to the vendor and the rest is distributed according to claims. The portion which goes to the vendor is the amount of arrears to the extent of one year?

*MR. WYNDHAM: Yes, and the bonus.

MR. LAMBERT: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether in fixing rents in Ireland the Commissioners estimate the value of the tenant's interest; and, if so, can he state approximately what proportion the tenant's interest bears to the total value of the holding.

*MR. WYNDHAM: The Commissioners fix rents in accordance with the provisions of a complicated schedule, of which I will send a copy to the hon. Member. It is not possible to answer the second inquiry. Lord Templetown's Return (House of Lords Paper No. 193 of 1901) gives the nearest approximate information.

MR. LAMBERT: Is that Return available for Members of the House?

*MR. WYNDHAM: Yes, Sir.

The Government and British Agriculture.

MR. LAMBERT: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he will introduce legislation offering similar facilities to British landowners and farmers as are proposed by the Irish Land Bill to be given to the Irish owners and occupiers of land.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): There is no parallel between the two cases.

MR. LAMBERT: Will the right hon. Gentleman reconsider the matter if British farmers cheer the defeat of a British general?

Scottish Education.

MR. NICOL (Argyllshire): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether any, and, if so, what, steps will be taken to secure that the special education interests of Scotland are adequately represented on the body which is to be appointed to act in conjunction with the Director of Military Education.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Scottish University authorities will be asked to confer on the subject referred to in my hon. friend's Question, but nothing can be said at present about the separate representation of Universities.

Non-Renewal of Licences—Question of Compensation.

MR. HORNER (Lambeth, N.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, having regard to the action of magistrates in refusing to renew licences of licensed victuallers where no complaint has been adduced against their mode of conducting their businesses, and, in view of the declarations of magistrates of their intention of suppressing licences in the future, he can now state whether he will introduce legislation to compensate such licence holders for the loss of their licences; and, if so, when.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am afraid I have nothing to add to the statement I made in public recently. Certainly I can make no announcement at the present moment.

MR. HORNER: Will the right hon. Gentleman give facilities for the Bill of the hon. Member for York.

No reply was returned.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. LAMBERT: Does the right hon. Gentleman intend to take the Adulteration of Butter Bill to-morrow?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am glad that the hon. Member has asked this Question, for in view of what has occurred I wish to make a correction of my statement the other day as to the course of business. I was then under the impression that we had to discuss a very important Amendment on the Motion that the Speaker leave the Chair, which would have raised the subject of University education in Ireland. In view of that I saw no prospect of getting the Speaker out of the Chair under two days. That Motion has, as I understand, been taken off the Paper; and, therefore, there will be no difficulty in getting the Speaker out of the Chair on Thursday night. On Tuesday the first Motion, I believe, is the ordinary sessional order allowing Ways and Means to be taken after twelve. That has been passed in former years because it has been found very inconvenient not to have it. The Butter Bill would be the first order among the Bills, and after that there would be the Sheep Scab Bill and the Contracts (India Office) Bill. The Naval Forces Bill in Committee would be the fifth order of the day. On Wednesday we wish to conclude the proceedings we have already initiated on the Muncipal Trading Committee and also on the National Expenditure Committee. Both of those Committees ought to set to work again without undue delay. Then there is the Bill which my right hon. friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland mentioned in his speech in introducing the Irish Land Bill—the Bill which is to hand over to Ireland a grant consequent on what was given to England in respect of the Education Act of last session. That Bill will have to be introduced in Ways and Means, and I hope my right hon. friend will be able to introduce it upon Wednesday. I imagine it is a wholly uncontroversial measure. There will also be the Second Reading of the Army Annual Bill. On Thursday, as I have intimated, the business will be to move Mr. Speaker out of the Chair.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: When will the House adjourn for the holidays?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I should not like to give a full detailed answer. No doubt the last day on which we shall be asked to sit will be the Wednesday before Good Friday, and I should hope that, if the House gets on with the business as I trust it will, we need not reassemble until the morning sitting of Tuesday, 21st April.

MR. BUCHANAN (Perthshire, E.): When will the legislation be introduced to dispose of the Scottish equivalent grant?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: That is on the Estimates. There are special reasons, which my right hon. friend the Chief Secretary will explain, why the Irish grant should be made by legislation. It has nothing to do with the claim of Scotland.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee): The claim of Scotland is admitted?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

John Arthur Fyler, esquire, for the County of Surrey (North-Western or Chertsey Division).

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act for the better Prevention of Corruption." [Prevention of Corruption Bill [Lords].]

PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION BILL [LORDS].

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 126.]

MARINE INSURANCE BILL [LORDS].

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 127.]

HOUSE OF COMMONS (KITCHEN AND REFRESHMENT ROOMS).

Ordered, that Mr. Hudson be added to the Select Committee.—(*Sir Alexander Acland-Hood.*)

SUPPLY [5TH ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[MR. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1903-4.

1. £1,502,000, Works, Buildings, and Repairs, at Home and Abroad.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee) said there was an increase in this Vote of £400,000, half of which was due to the automatic increase of the annuities payable under the Naval Works Acts. He asked the Civil Lord what was the total expenditure under the Naval Works Acts during the current year, and what was the probable amount of expenditure under these Acts in the succeeding year. He also wished to have an Estimate of the prospective increase of annuities payable in the immediate future under these Acts. He hoped the Naval Works Bill would be introduced as soon as the Admiralty could find it convenient to introduce it. In past years it had been brought in far too late in the session. The net amount of this Vote was £1,000,000. That was a very serious matter, because ten or eleven years ago £400,000 was considered to be the normal amount of this Vote. Since then the great bulk of what used to fall on the Vote had been removed and placed under the Works Act, and thus they had a serious prospect before them of a large expenditure in connection with the Vote. That made it impossible for them to pursue the old practice of accepting the demands of the Admiralty under this Vote as *primâ facie* reasonable. The enormous increase of the Estimates made it necessary for the House to require a full explanation of every demand made by the Admiralty. It was impossible for a private Member to point to items in a large Vote and say they were unnecessary. They ought, at any rate, to be given information as to the new proposals made by the Government as apart from those already sanctioned by Parliament. He suggested that the Civil Lord should himself begin the debate on this Vote by giving the Committee an explanation of the new works of magnitude, such as those at Chatham, Portland, Malta, Jamaica, and Wei-hai-Wei. Particularly he would ask for some explanation of the item of £40,000 for land purchase. Had that anything to do with any previous policy of land purchase sanctioned by the House?

That was an example of the sort of large item which required a little preliminary explanation from the representative of the Admiralty before the Committee were asked to consider it at all. There was another proposal which was quite new and quite exceptional, the proposal with regard to Osborne. It was novel in this respect, that in every other case the Admiralty had always informed the Committee what the total amount would be that the Committee would be asked to authorise, but with regard to this Osborne work the Committee were asked to sanction an expenditure of £40,000 and they were not told of what whole that sum was a part. That was a matter as to which the Committee ought to be informed, because when the Vote was once passed they would not have the right to put these questions. He submitted that under the circumstances the hon. Member who represented the Admiralty should be invited to commence the debate and give such information as he could upon these matters, and he would also invite him to say—in the calculation which he possibly had made, but which they were not able to make, of all the works both big and small—whether he had been able to arrive at the gross amount which the Committee was asked to sanction.

*THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. PRETYMAN, Suffolk, Woodbridge) said in answer to the invitation of the hon. Member opposite it might be convenient if he were to say a few words on the position of affairs before the Committee on the question of works of magnitude. With regard to the general increase of that Vote he was justified in pointing out that the general expenditure on works could not be very well separated between this Vote and the Loans Acts, because, after all, it was all works, but although large works were dealt with by a Loan Act, he thought on this particular Vote the Committee should have an opportunity of discussing this question as a whole and raising the question of works generally. There was a double answer to the general increase, firstly, it was clearly due to the deficient expenditure in the past, upon works which had now to be filled up, and he thought that the hon. Gentleman opposite, who partly did that work, was largely responsible on that very ground for this policy of Loan Acts It was hardly sufficiently realised by those who initiated the wholesale expansion of the Navy generally, what that would amount to. It was taken for granted that the Navy consisted mainly of ships, though it might also have been considered that men would be required, but it was insufficiently considered what land defence would be required for those men and those ships. Let him take the question of berthing, which was a good illustration to enable a landsman to realise the magnitude of this question. A first-class cruiser required more than thirty acres of water space for berthing room, and when they came to talk of berthing a fleet, and to consider the further point that where ships used to be able to lie in the open roadsteads safe from all attack save from vessels of their own size, they were now liable to be attacked by torpedoes, with the result that large ships, requiring this enormous amount of space, could no longer lie out in the open roadsteads, but had to be confined in what might be described as torpedo safe harbours and required enlarged barracks and stores of all kinds, hon. Members could realise what that meant. One of the items related to oil stores, which might sound rather prosaic, but where would the Mediterranean Fleet be if there was no proper base for the supply of oil upon which that fleet depended. He sometimes thought that the responsibility of the Admiralty was really greater in these matters than in the provision of the ships themselves. If the Admiralty did not do its duty in supplying a building programme there was not an hon. Member in this House who would not claim to display his knowledge of naval matters before the Committee in criticising the Admiralty, but it was extremely difficult for any hon. Member, however anxious he might be to criticise the Naval Votes, to follow all these details and say what was necessary, and what ought to be done. The responsibility lay more heavily on the Admiralty in these matters, for which they were not so liable to be called to account if they fell behind, since the results to the country would be just as disastrous as if a fleet was not built.

The Committee was voting enormous sums to build ships, and it was the duty of the Admiralty to do what was necessary for those ships. That was the answer to the great expansion of expenditure on the fleet generally, whether in Loan Acts or this Vote. With regard to the question of the estimated expenditure under the Works Acts of last year and the previous year, the Committee would remember it was about £6,000,000, and the Admiralty had spent up to within £400,000 of that amount, or perhaps a little more. He would not elaborate that point, as he understood the hon. Member only required the information generally as a financial guide. But he was afraid he would not be able to say what the expenditure was likely to be during the coming year, because the exact form of the Works Bill was not yet settled, and he had no figures which he could give with confidence at this stage. With regard to the question of the annuities on Vote 10, that was an actuarial calculation, which could easily be made so as to show what the interest would amount to on these different sums as they were borrowed. There was no doubt the whole of the annuities would amount, before many years had passed, to several millions, but he could not hold out any hope to the hon Gentleman that that would be the bulk of Vote 10, nor could he hold out any hope to the Committee that the expenditure on Vote 10 was likely to fall below one million if at all. Because if hon. Gentlemen would consider what the expenditure had been, and what it would be in the course of the year, and what a small percentage of maintenance there was on such works as docks and breakwaters—on works of that kind there was not much required for maintenance—but when they came to deal with barracks, hospitals, stores, and other buildings the expenditure for maintenance was very heavy indeed. That expenditure would and must follow the large capital expenditure that was now being incurred. The hon. Gentleman opposite had desired him to make some statement as to the new works of magnitude now being initiated, but he had not made the calculation, and was not able to do so. If the hon. Gentleman had given him notice, it would have been possible to put the exact figures together. He could say, generally, that the expenditure on real or new works under this Vote amounted practically to £100,000 this year—at least, that was his impression. They were not all works of magnitude, that was an expression which might be variously interpreted. To what limit did the hon. Gentleman go?

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: To the £200,000 limit.

*MR. PRETYMAN: The hon. Gentleman had asked with respect to particular works at Chatham and Portland. Owing to a fire breaking out at Chatham a few months ago, it had been necessary to rebuild the mould loft there completely. There was no need to speak of the extension of the electrical workshops; electrical works and machinery were constantly required to develop that shop in accordance with the advance of electrical science. A thousand pounds was being asked for new roads, and that was required merely for the development of roads as the dockyard expanded. As to the expenditure on the store for water tube boilers, the hon. Member for Gateshead would perhaps hold that the boilers were better in the store than on board ship, and possibly on that ground would be induced to support the Vote. There was also the provision of six tanks for the storage of lubricating oil. The only new item of importance at Portland was the erection of three official residences, one for the harbour master, one for the works officer, and the other for the naval store officer. The expenditure really arose from the completion of the breakwater at Portland, which place was now to be the base for the Home Fleet, a considerable increase of establishment being thereby involved. The harbour master, who would have considerable duties to perform, had only recently been appointed, and as no house existed for him it was necessary to build one. The breakwater would be taken over from the contractor in about eight weeks time, and it would then be necessary to have at Portland a superintending engineer who will be on the spot. In the same way, being the headquarters of the Home Fleet, Portland would naturally be a much larger depôt for stores than it had previously been. The land on which the houses were built had cost the Admiralty nothing, as they had been able to obtain an eligible site from the War Office.

The question concerning Osborne raised a point of greater interest and importance. Under the new scheme for the entry and the training of naval officers, it was decided to establish another training college, because one college would not be sufficient. Just before that decision His Majesty had signified his intention, without knowing that it would at once be put to such good use, of presenting Osborne House and grounds to the country. It was always a matter of great difficulty to acquire eligible sites for any kind of naval establishment, but here, thanks to His Majesty, they had a most admirable site, in a situation second to none. There were also ready to hand such things as a water supply, a drainage system, and so forth, which ordinarily would have taken a long time to provide, and, in addition to the land, a large block of buildings, hitherto used as stables, which at comparatively little cost would become available for class-rooms, offices, and other necessary premises. A short distance away was the Medina, suitable for boating purposes, and an excellent site had been found on the shore for an engineering school in which the cadets would be taught that branch of their profession. Cadets who entered under the present system, which would continue for another two or three years, would still enter the old "Britannia" ship. About the middle or end of next year it was hoped the new Britannia College would be available for new entrants, who in the meantime would be provided for at Osborne. Eventually the entrants would fill both the Britannia College and Osborne, but at present the accommodation at Osborne would be necessary only to meet requirements until the new Britannia College was ready. When that college was full, which would be in about two years, they would have to come back to Osborne, and the two establishments together would meet the entire wants of the service. It was hoped the buildings at Osborne would be ready for the accommodation of cadets in or about August next. The buildings, which were not to be of a high architectural character, would be in the nature of bungalows, constructed of a sanitary, and durable, material called Euralite—no wood would be used; the flooring would be of concrete with a paving; and the heating arrangement would be by steam from a separate boiler house. A large gymnasium and recreation hall were also being provided. The total number of cadets provided for in the two establishments would be between 700 and 800. Changes in the naval service were very frequent, so that it was desirable to be able to vary the accommodation as required, without having to alter existing buildings to any great extent. This end would be secured by the system being adopted at Osborne. The class-rooms, gymnasium, and so forth were separate, and could be added to without difficulty when occasion arose. Each bungalow would accommodate about thirty cadets, and about 200 would be provided for at Osborne, that being the accommodation required pending the completion of Britannia College. As to the £40,000 for the purchase of land, the Admiralty had had compulsorily to take land at Deal for a rifle range, but there was no really large item involved, the sum covering all the purchases proposed for the year.

SIR WILLIAM ALLAN (Gateshead) said it was self-evident that this Works Vote would always increase year by year. When the late Liberal Administration nine and a half years ago began to build vessels of the dimensions of the "Terrible" the Admiralty had no docks to put them in. From that time onwards there had been a gradual and natural growth of Works expenditure. Dry docks and wet docks were necessary, and, so far from being surprised at the increase, he thought the growth of expenditure under this Vote was small considering what had had to be done. Ten years ago they had no proper tools or docks at Devonport or Chatham. Therefore he could account for all the increases in the dockyard expenses. There was another item of £23,000 for naval armaments, such as torpedo boat stations and outfit, and there was an increase in the educational expenses of £74,550. That seemed to be a large item for education, but it was all necessitated by the increased cost of training officers. There was another item of £15,000 for ordinary repairs and maintenance at home and abroad, but that was a very small item indeed. He did not consider any of these increases out of the way, considering the magnitude of the work they had got to do. They had to dock their vessels and repair them, and make them fit for sea in the shortest possible time. They could not do that at the present time. Had the Admiralty proper dock accommodation and repairing ships, engine factories, and a proper system for repairing the ships in their own dockyards? He contended that they had not. Speaking from a practical point of view he believed that this Vote would increase in quantity every year, and the Admiralty should not rest until every factory at Devonport, Portsmouth, Pembroke, and Sheerness was able to repair any of their ships, and if they were not fit to do this they should get the money to make them fit. So far as he was concerned he did not object to this Vote, and in future years they ought to make their dockyards fit to repair any of their ships instead of having to send them all round the coast to Glasgow or Belfast to have repairs done which ought to be done in their own dockyards.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth) said there were one or two points upon which he desired to obtain some further information. With regard to Jamaica he was glad to see a new charge of £1,000, because it disposed of the rumour that the Admiralty were changing their policy with regard to the position of Jamaica as a coaling station. With regard to the Cape, the First Lord of the Admiralty's Memorandum told them that the preliminary work there had been commenced. He should be glad if his hon. friend would give them a further statement as to what was the exact position with regard to the progress of the dock at Simon's Bay. He noticed an item for house accommodation for the police of £1,400, and another sum of £2,000 for a residence for the Commander-in-Chief's secretary's clerks. He noticed also that there was a further charge for a new storehouse for ammunition. It appeared to him that they were going to spend as much on residences to accommodate the police and the Commander-in-Chief's secretary's clerks as they were spending upon ammunition stores. The Admiral had his flagship, and accommodation on board for his secretary and clerks, and he could not see why further accommodation on shore was necessary. There was another item for a cooking-house and reading-room at Esquimalt, about which he should like some information. He wished to know something about the tenure of the land. Had the Canadian Government given the land for nothing, or did the Admiralty hold it under a perpetual arrangement, because in other colonies there was very great confusion as to the nature of the Imperial tenure of the land upon which Imperial buildings were built? Was this cooking-house and reading-room for the Government employees in Esquimalt, or was it for the blue-jackets or Marines when they went ashore? If the latter, was it necessary, in view of the fact that they had there an Imperial garrison under the War Office already supplied with cooking-houses and reading-rooms? These dual arrangements at our coaling stations too often involved double expense.

With reference to the Falkland Islands they would become places of the utmost importance in case the Suez Canal was blocked. Therefore, the Admiralty were right in making provision at the Falkland Islands for coaling. They were told in the First Lord of the Admiralty's Memorandum that the arrangements would be complete this year, but there was a further charge of £3,000 to complete, which was not a new charge. If this work was to be completed in the current year, he did not see why it came on the Estimates for the next financial year. He wished to know whether this expenditure covered provision for rapid coaling in order to secure that the ships should have all those facilities that modern science had provided. He wished to know if the buildings there were so arranged as to provide for protection from the weather, and whether anything was being done to protect the coaling stations in the unhappy event of war. His hon. friend might say that that was a War Office affair. Had any demand been made by the Admiralty in the Imperial interests that the War Office should make arrangements to provide for such an event in order to give this coaling station the necessary military local protection? The point was one of very great importance. The real truth was that if war was unhappily to break out in the month of April or May, it was in the water area of which the Falkland Islands were the centre that the protection of our wheat supply would be most pressing. He had often complained of exaggerated works and garrisons at coaling stations elsewhere, and he was not going to commit a breach of order by discussing the matter now. He knew that the War Office was piling on money and exaggerating expenditure for the protection of garrisons in other parts of the world, and he wished to know what was being done in regard to the coaling stations to which he had referred. Were they to be left open to attack and destruction by the most insignificant improvised cruiser? With regard to Wei-hai-Wei, he reminded the Committee that there was an expenditure by the War Office at that place on buildings. According to the Estimates it was proposed to provide a new hospital there, and he wished to know what had happened to the buildings the War Office paid for. Was it not possible to render any part of these buildings fit for hospital purposes? Was this to be a brand-new hospital? He found there was a new charge of £6,000 on the Estimates for lunatics and prisoners at Plymouth. Yarmouth had hitherto been the place for the treatment of the unfortunate creatures belonging to the Navy who had lost their mind. Was it not a new departure to have lunatic wards in ordinary hospitals where hitherto that class had not been taken in?

* MR. PRETYMAN was understood to say that it was not proposed to do so.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB said it was on the Estimates, but if there was no such proposal he need not pursue the matter further. If additional accommodation was required for lunatics, he wished to know whether due inquiry had been made as to the possibility of obtaining suitable ground at Yarmouth from unused War Office ground adjoining, with the view to the establishment being still concentrated there.

MR. BUCHANAN (Perthshire, E.) called attention to item M. M.—"Purchases of lands and buildings at home and abroad," amounting to £40,000, as against £15,000 for the year now closing. What was the reason why the Estimates did not tell the purposes for which this money was being asked? Until two years ago the invariable practice was to give, on the Naval Estimates, particulars of the purposes for which the money was being asked. This year the Committee had an extra claim for particulars, seeing that there was an increase of £25,000. By giving more accurate information on the Estimates as to the purposes for which the money was asked, the tendency would be to curb the putting down undue sums. His hon. friend the Member for Dundee asked what was the amount of the commitment on the Estimates for new works during the ensuing year, but, judging from the reply, the Civil Lord hardly understood the Question. The hon. Gentleman said the Estimate was £100,000, but clearly that figure was wide of the mark.

*MR. PRETYMAN: What I said was that £100,000 was the provision made for new works this year.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON said that what he asked was the amount of the total commitments.

*MR. PRETYMAN said the amounts were shown on the Estimates.

MR. BUCHANAN said the amounts were not shown in regard to many of the minor items. The Committee might fairly have expected the hon. Gentleman to tell them the total amount of the commitments under the term "New Works." There were one or two items in regard to which he had given no explanation. One was £20,000 for "accommodation on shore for boys' training establishments at Harwich"; the other was £88,000 for a general hospital and sanatorium at the Cape of Good Hope. There were sums which, added to these, showed that the total commitment would be £400,000. It would only be fair to the Committee to state what they were committing themselves to by passing this Vote. He was disappointed to find that the hon. Gentleman was unable to give the probable expenditure under the Naval Works Act. It had been the custom in past years for the First Lord to give a statement in regard to estimated expenditure on new works at the beginning of the Estimates.

*MR. PRETYMAN said that was done when there was no New Works Bill. This year there was a New Works Bill.

MR. BUCHANAN said the hon. Gentleman was not quite correct. During the whole of the time that Lord Goschen was First Lord of the Admiralty he always gave an estimate of the amount to be expended on new works. They did not ask the hon. Gentleman to commit himself to a precise figure, but they did insist upon getting a general idea of the total amount estimated to be expended during the ensuing year on new works. A further reason for insisting upon this information was that it had become the practice year after year to put later and later the consideration of the Naval Works Act. He did not think it was a fair way of treating the House of Commons and the taxpayers of the country. He should like to know how the charges were apportioned between the Naval Works Act and this Vote. Was there any principle adopted by the Admiralty as to what new works should be put on the Votes and what should be included in the Naval Works Act? He thought the general idea most hon. Members had was that expenditure was put in the Naval Works Act when it involved millions of money on works the construction of which extended over a considerable number of years, and which were of a distinctly permanent character. It was argued with force and plausibility that the expenditure on large and important naval works which would benefit not only ourselves but our successors should be borne on the expenses not of a single year, in view of the fact that the terminable annuities were for twenty-five years. But when they came to look into the details of the matter they found that while large works were undoubtedly put into the Naval Works Act, there was also expenditure which certainly did not come under that category, and which it appeared to him would be much more suitable under the Naval Works Vote. At present they were putting in the Naval Works Act exactly analogous works which had been previously included in the Works Vote. There ought to be some justification for this practice. Credit was taken under the Naval Works Act of 1901 for dredging and deepening the docks at the dock yards for a large sum, and for something over a million for improving coaling facilities. That might have been right or might have been wrong, but it was not a proper purpose for which money should be borrowed. In this Vote now before the Committee, notwithstanding what was done under the Naval Works Act of 1901, they found several items or dredging and improving coaling facilities. That showed that there was no hard and fast line as to what should be in the Naval Works Act and what should be borne on the Naval Votes of the year. There was a correspondence attached to the Appropriation accounts just issued which showed that instructions had been issued by the Admiralty to confine the works at Wei-hai-Wei to those which had been actually started. That showed that these works were essentially temporary in character, and yet the cost was going to be defrayed out of borrowed money and not borne on the Estimates of the year. He thought that was most improper, and more especially as Parliament had not been informed of this intention on the part of the Government to spend no more money at Wei-hai-Wei. If the House of Commons was to retain any control over the expenditure on the Naval Works they ought to have some statement from the Civil Lord as to the general grounds on which the Admiralty included one charge on the Votes and another charge in the Naval Works Act.

*GENERAL LAURIE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest) said he wished to follow the line of thought placed before the Committee by the hon. Member for Gateshead in pointing out that they had been building ships but had been making no preparation for repairing them. Actually in time of peace they had been driven to private yards to get the ordinary wear and tear repairs made. What then would be their position in war time? It seemed to him to be their first duty to have dockyards in which repairs could be carried out so as to send back disabled ships to their stations as soon as possible after being repaired. There was some difficulty in obtaining official information as to the supply of docks available, and although it could be obtained privately they could not use it in debate. The hon. and gallant Member for Great Yarmouth had pointed out the importance of keeping open the route for food which came round Cape Horn by the Falkland Islands, but practically all our food supply would pass the Eastern Atlantic and strike first the West Coast of these Islands. In time of war they ought to have these ships protected, and it was probably there that we should fight, but disabled ships would find a passage round the Land's End very dangerous, and yet there was no provision for refitting them on the West Coast north of the Land's End. It was true there were two docks at Haulbowline, but, practically, at these there was no establishment of men to do the repairs. At Milford Haven, on the other hand, there was a large establishment of men but no repairing dock. He hoped the Admiralty would consider this matter and make further arrangements for repairing ships and supplying proper dock accommodation, especially on the West Coast north of Land's End.

MR. REGINALD LUCAS (Portsmouth) said he wished for some explanation as to the expenditure on naval works at Wei-hai-Wei.

SIR JOHN GORST (Cambridge University) said he wanted to support the appeal made to the Government by the hon. Member for East Perthshire. Some sort of line should be laid down by the Admiralty as to what should be put in the Works Bill and what on the Navy Votes; otherwise the House of Commons would lose its financial control. He rose particularly to ask a question of the Civil Lord of the Admiralty about the expenditure at Osborne. He supposed it was much more convenient to discuss the question of the cost of the school at Osborne on the Education Vote than on this particular Vote. It was a well-established financial principle of the Committee of Supply that no item should be voted for the service of the year unless the whole Vote for the service was before the Committee. In his younger days that principle was particularly observed. The Civil Lord of the Admiralty said that in some two or three years there might be another demand for new works at Osborne. He thought that the omission to give the total expenditure was mainly caused by the hurry in which the resolution to adapt these premises was taken; but the Civil Lord ought to say what was the total estimate which the Admiralty considered sufficient to make the buildings at Osborne fit to receive the 200 cadets. That, surely, ought not to be a very difficult thing to state; and it ought to be stated before the amount was granted.

*SIR A. HAYTER (Walsall) said he wished to emphasise the importance of the principle which had been laid down by his hon. friend the Member for Perthshire, namely, as to disassociating expenditure under the Naval Works Acts from expenditure taken on the Estimates. It was almost impossible for the Public Accounts Committee to find out what the expense on any particular item was. For instance, in the last issue of the Naval Works Act, £636,000 was taken for deepening the harbour approaches at Portsmouth; and £98,000 was subsequently taken on the Estimates. Therefore, it could not be said that only small sums were taken on the Estimates; and unless a definite principle was laid down it would be very difficult for the Public Accounts Committee to ascertain what the exact expenditure was. There was one item on the Estimates which had a very extraordinary history. It was the item for a cold meat store. Originally it was intended for an ammunition store, but when completed it was found to be too damp for that purpose. He asked about the matter the other day on the Army Estimates. The Secretary of State for War stated that £47,000 had been spent between the two services in adapting the store to a frozen meat store; and the right hon. Gentleman explained that the expense was mainly due to the freezing machinery which had been put in. But that only amounted to £9,000; and he could not understand, if the store had been properly built originally, that a sum of £38,000 would be required to turn it from an ammunition store into a frozen meat store. Then it also appeared that new canteens were to be constructed at Malta and Wei-hai-Wei; and he wished to know why only a very small proportion of the total amount was now being asked for.

*Mr. PRETYMAN said that the amounts taken for the comparatively small items mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman really depended on the time that the operations would be commenced. If they were going to commence immediately larger amounts would have to be asked for. But they were not going to commence at once; and the amounts they had asked for would be sufficient for the financial year. With reference to the cold meat store, it was a matter entirely of War Office expenditure and War Office direction of the works. The Admiralty asked for what they required; and where the work was for the accommodation of both services, as in this case, it was usual for either the Admiralty or the War Office, according to local necessities and local capacity, to undertake it, charging a proportion of the cost to each Department. In such a case the Department actually carrying out the work was held entirely responsible. Where, however, work was done by one Department for another, it had been recently laid down that it should be carefully inspected before being taken over, and before it was paid for. With reference to the details of the works he was afraid he was not in a position to give them to the right hon. Gentleman. They were prepared to pay their proportion of the actual cost, as far as the original amount expended was concerned, and he had no doubt that they were getting value for it.

As to the general question of the allocation of expenditure between Works Acts and the Votes, it was one of considerable importance. As regarded the question in the concrete, it was one which it was proper to discuss; but the hon. Member for East Perthshire, in the actual instances he brought forward, mentioned two or three cases where small sums had been expended under loans. That was the case some years ago, but was not the case now; and the instances referred to by the hon. Gentleman were works which were entirely out of date. The Schedule was not one which contained the works actually now in progress, but all the works which had ever been included in a Naval Works Act since the present series commenced. He quite admitted that, as in all cases where a line had to be drawn, particular instances might arise in which it was rather difficult to draw it; but the principle had been correctly laid down by his right hon. friend the Member for the Cambridge University, who said that where there were large works of a permanent character the policy was that they would be justified in borrowing money for them; and throwing, in that manner, a portion of the charge on posterity. He thought if the Committee looked at the Schedule of the present Works Acts they would see that no item was included not in that category. It was true that some works were still placed on the Votes for which large sums of money had been taken on the Works Acts, especially for dredging and coaling. That was easily accounted for. With regard to dredging, it was very simple to draw the line. New dredging of a permanent character, where it was necessary to dredge out a berth and convert shallow water into 20 or 30 feet deep was a charge on the Works Act. On the other hand, maintenance dredging, which was constantly going on, and which would be required to keep the berths open, was a charge on the Votes. As to coaling, a sum of £1,000,000 sterling was taken in the Works Act of the year before last, as a special provision for large coaling depôts. None of that money was allocated for the ordinary work of providing coal stores, or the ordinary accommodation of the fleet for coaling; but it was most desirable, under the principle which was accepted by the House two years ago, that a large capital sum should be voted for the provision of coaling bases with modern appliances at certain specified stations. But that did not exempt the Admiralty from continuing expenditure under the Vote on the ordinary coaling service of the Fleet, which went on as before. He did not think that anything more was necessary to be said. With reference to the hospital at Wei-hai-Wei, it was at first difficult to decide whether it should be a loan item or be put on the Votes; but when the policy of Wei-hai-Wei was changed, the amount became clearly a Vote item. The cost of the Cape Hospital was also charged on the Votes.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE asked why only £1,000 was taken for Wei hai-Wei, and why such small progress was made when the total item was £45,000.

*MR. PRETYMAN said the reason why expenditure on Wei-hai-Wei was very small was that they were fortunate in securing a very large War Office building called Queen's House. When we originally took over Wei-hai-Wei as a station, practically the whole of the property was bought by the Admiralty and the War Office. Now under the new arrangement Wei-hai-Wei would be under the jurisdiction of the Colonial Office. The military establishment had been withdrawn altogether and the Admiralty establishment had been reduced, and an arrangement had been made by which all the buildings which had been the property of the War Office and the Admiralty, and which were now no longer required by either of those Services, would be handed over to the Colonial Office, who would become the owners of them; but those buildings still required by the Admiralty for use were left in their possession. The Admiralty were also obtaining from the War Office the properties which they had and which the Admiralty now required. Among those was the largest house in the island, the Queen's House, for the purposes of a canteen. It was an entirely new building, and in that way the Admiralty did not see their way to spend more than £1,000. But they were not precluded from spending money if they found themselves able to do so, because the position of this Vote was that the Admiralty, with the sanction of the Treasury, could, if in any item they were able to make more progress, and if they were saving upon another item, spend on the one what they saved upon the other, always providing they did not exceed the total Vote of the year. That was the procedure which had been adopted, and there was no other possible way of dealing with the matter, because it was impossible to tell beforehand exactly how far conditions would allow progress to proceed on any single item.

With reference to the points raised by the hon. Baronet the Member for Yarmouth, the residences at Jamaica were being built solely on sanitary grounds. The present accommodation was very insanitary, and these residences, when built, would be allocated to those who were now accommodated in the present insanitary area. They were not for new accommodation. With reference to the residences at St. Simon's Bay, in South Africa, they no doubt were rather costly, but that was due to the cost of labour in South Africa at the present moment, and the difficulty of hiring residences there. The Commander-in-Chief found it necessary to provide accommodation, although it was not usual, but it was absolutely impossible to get residences which were already built, and it had to be done in this way. With regard to the cook house and reading room at Esquimalt there was no new policy involved. The old cook house and reading room were described as being uninhabitable, and this was simply reprovision of accommodation. It was not in any way for dockyard ratings, but solely for men of the Fleet. It not infrequently happened that crews had to be landed to wait for other ships, or ships had to be refitted, and this money was to provide for the accommodation of the men in those cases. The Admiralty tenure of the land at Esquimalt was beyond dispute, and formed part of the naval reservation before Esquimalt existed. The accommodation at the Falkland Islands was for 6,000 tons of coal, which was covered and protected from the weather. The arrangements for coaling there were not on the modern scale, which would be most costly. The hon. Baronet must remember where these islands were. The most powerful fleet would think some time before attempting to molest them.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB said he did not speak of fleets but insignificant marauding cruisers which could coal at neutral ports within less than 600 miles of the Falklands.

*MR. PRETYMAN said he would not deal with the naval policy on this Vote, but the tender and barges provided would always be available for transferring coal to ships coaling there. There were no defences at the Falkland Islands, that was not due to the advice of the War Office but the Admiralty, which considered that these islands must always be in the possession of those who held the sea, and were quite content to trust the Navy to defend them, and had not considered it necessary to make any demand for defences. With regard to the lunatics ward at Plymouth, that heading perhaps was rather misleading. There was an entire reconstruction going on at the present time at Plymouth, and this ward was one of those which had to be reconstructed, and the lunatics and prisoners there had to be provided for. There was no change of policy so far as Yarmouth was concerned; the expenditure there was the ordinary expenditure.

The hon. Member for Perthshire expressed the opinion that from the point of view of economy every item under the sub-head "Land" should be detailed for the Committee, and that before negotiations began there should appear on the Estimates the sum the Government were prepared to pay for land, and that this sum should be as large as was necessary to cover the purchase! He did not think that such a practice would conduce to economy. He did not think the hon. Member, if he were going to negotiate a purchase on his own account, would adopt any such practice. He hoped the Committee would give the Admiralty credit for doing their best for national economy and getting the land they required as cheaply as possible.

With regard to the boys' training establishments on land, the ships now used as training establishments for boys were rotten and insanitary, and the Admiralty had many cases where there had been illness, and some, unfortunately, of death. They had been able to make some comparisons, because there was a large training establishment for boys at Greenwich where there were 1,000 boys, and the comparison of that training establishment with a floating one with a similar number of boys had shown a distinct advantage in favour of training establishments ashore. Many of the boys had been brought from inland districts and had not had any previous sea training, and it might be argued that if they were to be trained on shore they would not be brought into the sea-atmosphere which was so desirable. That was a natural and justifiable criticism, but the difficulty would be provided for by there being allotted to each training establishment, not an anchored vessel as at present, but a small cruiser, in which the boys would be able to obtain sea training under conditions much more resembling those of actual service than was at present possible; so that the Admiralty hoped to gain rather than to lose from that point of view. There was also an advantage as regarded the health of the boys. At present the boys on the ships slept in hammocks, and the medical officers considered that growing boys did not develop physically so well in hammocks as they would do if they slept in beds; therefore beds would be provided in these training establishments. The buildings would be of the bungalow type, about fifty boys being provided for in each, and in that way it was roughly estimated that accommodation would be provided at about £60 per boy. For obvious reasons he asked the hon. Member not to press him on the question of the sites. The total commitments for new items on the Vote, when completed, would amount to £560,000. Some of the works would take a considerable time to carry out, and that sum included the two large items of the Osborne Training Establishment, and the training establishments ashore for boys.

As to increasing the repairing accommodation in the yards, it was of enormous importance that in peace time the commercial yards should be given repairing work so that they might acquire actual experience in the work of repairing naval vessels; otherwise in war time delays might arise with very serious results to the country. With regard to the point raised by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University, the £40,000 asked for would provide practically the whole of the accommodation that would be required before the Britannia College was ready for occupation. As the work was not being carried out by the Admiralty he had not studied the figures as he would otherwise have done. The land being Crown land, handed over not to the Admiralty but to the nation, the Office of Works had charge of the operations. The Admiralty were greatly indebted to the Office of Works for the manner in which, at such short notice, they had taken up the work. The matter was not proposed until about last Christmas, and that the buildings should be ready for 200 cadets by next August, which he hoped would be the case, was really a phenomenal result.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.) said the total of £560,000 was a gigantic sum for new commitments, and it was only reasonable to ask that all the items should be put together in future Estimates so that they could be considered beforehand. He also asked that particulars should be given of the purchase of any land that was to be borne on the Votes. The item had jumped from £15,000 to £40,000, but the practice of explaining its object which had prevailed with regard to the smaller sum had been departed from. He objected to the liberality with which the Admiralty were acceding to every appeal made to them. Items of an extraordinary character were being introduced. For instance, why should Malta get a theatre at a cost of £8,000? The very next item was £10,000 for a new church. Why should the Admiralty put up churches? If one at Eastney, why not others elsewhere? Then there was a swimming bath and a recreation room. None of these items had been explained. He should have thought sailors would swim in the sea. The fact of the matter was that the Admiralty had got into the habit of doing everything that anybody asked them to do without inquiring as to the cost or giving any particulars to the House of Commons.

* MR. PRETYMAN pointed out that there were about 15,000 active service ratings in the Mediterranean Fleet, of which Malta was the headquarters, and it was of enormous importance that the men should be provided with some rational amusement when ashore. The men themselves, out of the canteen takings, provided considerable sums for the furnishing and running of the canteen and for providing amusement, recreation, and instruction for themselves. This matter had received very careful attention. The theatre was on Admiralty property, and, as the Admiralty had for national purposes to retain power to resume possession of the land at any moment, it was not thought right that the savings of the men should be applied to the erection of permanent buildings in which they could not be allowed any property; therefore it had been decided to provide money and place it on the Votes. With regard to the church at Eastney, the marine barracks were a considerable distance from any existing church; a new church was absolutely necessary, and it had always been the policy of Parliament to provide money for the erection of churches or chapels for large garrisons, whether naval or military, where the men had not sufficient access to the parish church. As to the swimming bath, the hon. Member appeared to be of the opinion of the man who declared he would never go into the water until he could swim. These baths were for teaching the men to swim, and were part of the establishment.

Vote agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £2,292,500, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the expense of victualling and clothing for the Navy, including the cost of victualling establishments at home and abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

MR. KEARLEY said that this Vote was £200,000 in excess of the normal sum. The dietary of the Navy was a matter he had taken a considerable interest in for some years and he had raised the matter almost every year. His complaint in the past had been in regard to the lack of variety in the food, because for many years the dietary of the Navy had remained without any deviation. The meal hours used to be very curious indeed, and he was very glad that the Admiralty had now recognised that the complaints made in former years, both with regard to the lack of variety in the food and the meal hours were well founded. The Admiralty now recommended that there should be five recognised meal times during the day, finishing up with a supper at half-past seven or eight o'clock at night. This would prove to be a great boon to the men, because under the old system a man used to get his last meal at half-past four, and he had to be on duty sometimes at four or five o'clock the next morning, and that was a great trial. As regarded the rations, the Committee which had gone into this question recommended an increase in variety and also an increase in quantity. It would be seen that the Committee's recommendations were fairly liberal from the fact that the additional cost was £187,000 per year. Since the Committee's Report was published the Navy had continued to increase, and he doubted very much whether the actual increase in the future would be less than £200,000 a year. This increase only applied to the service rations, and in addition to that the seamen had to supplement their dietary out of their own money, out of savings obtained by a money grant for rations which they did not consume. The amount of these savings was largely increasing; that was to say, that the money grant in lieu of rations was largely increasing. The total amount voted this year for food was in round figures £1,288,000, and the amount paid back in savings was £520,000. A large portion of the service rations were, therefore, not taken up at all.

As the canteens now formed an official part of the victualling of the Fleet, he wished to call attention to their management. The Committee pointed out that the extension of the system of canteens had affected the quantity of service rations taken up by the men. If any further evidence was required he only needed to mention the fact that the annual canteen turnover of a battleship amounted to something like £6,000 a year. One would have supposed that the Admiralty would have considered it their duty to instruct the Committee to inquire into the conduct and management of canteens, but the terms of the reference almost excluded it from their consideration. Hon. Members would find it stated in the Report that the Admiralty were not prepared to consider the question of the management of these canteens being placed directly under the Government, because they were satisfied that their existence on board ship gave great comfort to the men, and that the present system, under which they were practically managed by the men themselves, with certain officers for disciplinary purposes, was a sound one. Those were the terms of the reference laid down by the Admiralty, and they seemed to think that there was no room for any particular improvement, and they would have no hand whatever in the conduct and management of the canteen. He would try to prove that the system was not a good one, and he believed that he would be able to show that under the present canteen system corruption and bribery were rampant, that the men were "fleeced" and robbed, and that it was really such an important part of the victualling of the Navy that he did not think the Admiralty were justified in allowing this state of things to go on. He thought it was the supreme duty of the Admiralty to see that the management of these canteens was made efficient.

There were two systems of canteens, one called the service or co-operative system, and the other the tenant system. The tenant system mainly applied to depôts and barracks, and was more of a shore system, but the co-operative system prevailed most generally upon ships in commission away from the harbours. Nominally, under the co-operative system, the management was under the control of an officer who was the president of the committee. The committee was supposed to be elective and thoroughly representative of the lower deck. The committee were responsible for the prices at which the articles were sold, and they controlled the quality also. According to the Report they also distributed the profits. The men had to supplement the dietary by providing money out of their own pockets for the canteen, and they were charged an exorbitant profit upon the cost of the articles. These profits were spent in a variety of ways. They went to provide prizes at sports, general amusements, contributions to service charities, and other purposes. The men were charged an excessive price for their food so that there would be a margin for these purposes. But, as a matter of fact, the actual management of these canteens was run by a small coterie from the lower deck in a hole-and-corner manner, and the crew at large had no idea of what was going on. They very rarely saw the accounts, and if they did see them, they were not in a position to discuss them. This little coterie from the lower deck made a practice of blackmailing the contractor, who, having submitted to the usual commission, regulated his prices accordingly. Therefore the consumer was the man who suffered all the time. Those were rather strong statements to make in the House of Commons, and he should have been a little loth to make them if he could not support them. These things were, however, shown in the Committee's Report. Not long ago he wrote to Lord Selborne, asking for a copy of the evidence given before this Committee, and he also asked whether it was the intention of the Admiralty to publish the evidence. Lord Selborne replied that the Admiralty had no intention of publishing that evidence because it was given before a Departmental Committee. The Committee had abundant evidence that bribery existed. He had a fair acquaintance with the men on the lower deck, having known a number of them for the last twelve years. He had heard what they had to say, but he did not press this subject simply because he was the representative of Devonport. He had received information from various channels in all parts of the world. It was no question of his constituents; in fact, the bulk of his information came from various stations where ships were in commission; and everything he had been told, verified the Report of the Committee who inquired into the matter.

The recommendation of the Committee was hardly worth considering seriously. It was that in future the commanding officer should have the selection of the canteen system to be employed—that was to say, whether it was to be the co-operative system or what was called the tenant system. The commanding officer was also to have the selection of the tradesmen who were to supply the canteen. In another part of the Report it was mentioned that officers had the greatest objection to running these canteens, they had not the necessary training, and he did not think that particular recommendation would lead to much reform. He doubted whether any commanding officer would be able, single-handed, to stop the system of bribery and corruption which prevailed. He had a small bundle of letters in his hand, written not to him directly, but to the editor of a service paper, from fifty-six ships in commission, and from every station where the Navy went, complaining of this vile system of blackmailing and robbery. He thought these were not too strong terms to use. He was not going to attempt to shield the men who did the blackmailing. He did not say that it took place on every ship. He was perfectly willing to hand the letters to the Admiralty if they treated them confidentially and did not bring the men to book for complaining. He had classified the articles referred to, and had taken only those of daily consumption. He had put against them what would be a fair price for the men to pay on shore at home ports. The canteen price for sugar was 3d. to 6d. per lb. against 1½d.; cheese, 1s. to 1s. 4d. per lb. against 7d.; tea (which was free from duty on board His Majesty's ships) 1s. 8d. to 1s. 10d. per lb. against 10d.; tinned salmon, 9d. to 11d. per tin against 5d.; tinned herrings, 6½d. to 8d. per tin against 4d.; rice, 3d. to 5d. per lb. against 1½d.; currants, 8d. to 11½d. per lb. against 3d.; tapioca, 5d. to 6½d. per lb. against 2½d.; peel, 9d. to 1s. 7d. per lb. against 4d.; raisins, 7d. to 9d. per lb. against 3¼d.; Sunlight soap, 1s. to 1s. 1½d. per box against 7½d.; Quaker oats, 10d. to 11¼d. per lb. against 5½d.; and jams, 2½d. per tin against 1d. He had extracted these prices paid on board ship from the letters. He would read some extracts from the letters. From the "Illustrious" in the Mediterranean—

"I may state that there has been a lot of trouble caused over the canteen of late aboard here. I really cannot side with the men for doing what they did. Their bills were so excessive they refused to pay them. Of course they were had over the coals for this, and eventually the money stopped out of their pay, and then they threw a lot of valuable service gear overboard because they had to pay. I hope that something will be done towards clearing such robbers out of His Majesty's ships."

From the "Centurion," Portsmouth—

"Prices charged are too great according to the ship's company's idea, and the goods that we had were of the most inferior quality and far dearer than bumboat prices anywhere in China or Japan. The ship's company have always been under the impression that the canteen was not properly managed; they had a new canteen committee every quarter—one for each branch; papers were sent round to each mess at the end of each quarter, but the lower deck did not even know who the majority of the votes were for, as it was never put on the canteen notice board."

From the "Cruiser," Naples—

"Maltese canteens are nearly all alike as regards the management of them and the way they are conducted; different prices for different ratings; English weights to-day and Maltese weights to-morrow; selling goods on board at double the price they can be procured ashore, are a few of the failings of the Maltese bumboat system. . . . Now our canteen is nothing better than the general run of them, if it is not worse. Our commanding officer told us when we were in Malta that if we were not satisfied with this canteen we could have another one. We were not satisfied with it, but we could not see the difference in Antonio Tabonio or Baptista Borda or Michael Borg robbing us, so we decided to retain the former, as we reckoned if we had to be robbed it was immaterial to us which of them it was. It is the system which is rotten, and I think the only way it can be remedied is by abolishing it altogether and substituting a better system."

From the "Sans Pareil," Sheerness—

"The general run of mess bills each month is 7s. 6d. to 10s. per man drawing 5s. per week, poor devils! and if they cannot pay their mess bills their leave is stopped till they can, so most of them get it stopped, as it takes over one week's pay to settle their mess."

From the "Cæsar," Lagos Bay—

"The goods supplied are far from being the best quality—in fact, it may be safely stated that the most inferior goods that can be purchased either from the local or British markets are the general rule."

From the "Perseus," Persian Gulf—

"I am sending an accurate list of our canteen stores, the exorbitant prices of which must surpass the prices of any other ship in the British Navy. Our men are up in arms about it. There are dozens of men whose private canteen bills during the last month have exceeded their month's pay, and then they have only just the bare necessaries of life. We commissioned on March 7th last, and no statement whatever as to canteen accounts has been made, and all we can hear is 'canteen is so much in debt.' At Kurachi, where we could get things cheap, they stopped the bumboatmen from bringing these aboard, as it was stopping the sale of things in our canteen. Some of the things are of a very inferior quality, the butter not being fit for scouring bright work let alone eating."

He had scores of letters all contributing the same testimony. The Committee had suggested a reform, but he held that the Admiralty had a far larger responsibility than could be met by carrying out what was proposed. The Admiralty ought themselves to become buyers of those articles which were taken into the canteen, and sell them at a fair margin of profit. The men should not be left to the tender mercies of the scoundrels who blackmailed them by charging extravagant prices. If it would necessitate storage all over the world why not provide it? The present methods were quite out of date. The Admiralty objected to make a change on the ground that it would interfere with the general principles of victualling the Fleet. The general principle of victualling the Fleet was most extraordinary and reeked with red-tape. In time of war the whole service rations, the Admiralty Regulations stated, would be available, all accounts would disappear, and no savings would be granted to the men, who would have to take up their full sea victualling. And in pursuance of that principle the Admiralty said that they had always ready reserve stores to meet the emergencies of war. Therefore they crowded their Victualling Yards with stores which were not consumed, and were largely in excess of their requirements. The result was that the stores deteriorated, and became stale. There was little outlet for the articles in reserve in time of peace because they could be procured on shore. Consequently, when the Admiralty did issue them out of reserve, in the majority of cases they were stale. It was on record that beef thirty years old had been issued to the Fleet, and ten-year-old beef was not uncommon. The Committee said that the beef was satisfactory, but with that he disagreed, and he maintained that the system was antiquated and complicated. The Committee said that these stores were treated like superannuated servants, and after a certain period were compulsorily retired. They were sent to a "rummage" sale, where they fetched a quarter of what they cost. The system was, therefore, not only costly, but it involved the Fleet receiving provisions that were not in a fit state to eat. He contended that, in the face of all these revelations, the Admiralty were not justified in retaining this antiquated system of keeping large reserves. He believed that the only satisfactory thing in the South African war was the feeding of the men. When the war came the manufacturers of the Empire were called upon, and they furnished sufficient supplies for the needs of the Army. He understood that the Admiralty said that the case of the Navy was quite different; but if they could not victual their Fleet in time of war, how could they expect to hold command of the sea in time of war? The Committee were entitled to ask the Admiralty to make some inquiry into this belated system. He sometimes wondered who would have to eat those articles which had been passed out of the reserve stores as not being considered good enough for the men of the Navy!

He had a few words to say as regarded the question of quality. There were two sources of supply from which rations were stocked for, and distributed to, the Navy—first, contractors, and second, the Government manufactories in the Victualling Yards. The Committee said in their Report that, so far as the quality of the goods supplied by the former was concerned, everything was satisfactory, and that the quality of the goods from the latter was perfectly satisfactory. But from facts frequently brought under his notice, he held that every article manufactured by the Government was bad except cocoa, and the very best proof of that was that the men refused to take them up. On page 16 of this Report of the Committee there was a reference to flour. Now, the Government made their own flour. But the Committee admitted that there was a consensus of opinion among the officers and men that the service flour was inferior to that purchased in the canteen. The service flour was—

> "Coarser, darker in colour, did not mix readily for the purpose of making bread, and was regarded by the men with a good deal of prejudice."

Mr. Kearley.

The Committee investigated the matter very carefully, and were convinced that although it differed from the canteen flour it was not of inferior quality. Now, he always thought that the consumer was the best judge of the quality of an article: and he insisted that the men of the lower deck were better judges of the service flour than two or three admirals, post-captains, and the other members of the Committee. Again, that Committee said that the flour was manufactured from the finest wheat that could be procured, and underwent no adulteration during manufacture. Nobody suggested that it was adulterated, but why was it that the flour manufactured in the Victualling Yards was "coarser, darker in colour, and did not mix readily for the purpose of making bread?" Were these the attributes of the flour milled from the "finest wheat" by the flour manufacturers in the country provided with the best machinery in the world? Why should the Government engage in this sort of manufacture and in turning out rascally bad flour—as they did? Then take the ships biscuit. The Committee said that there was no real ground of complaint. He had heard that statement over and over again. The fact was that the biscuit was complained of. If there was not very much to be said about the quality of the biscuit, he should have a good deal to say about the cost. He was certain that from some of the best firms of biscuit bakers in the country the Admiralty could get a better quality of biscuit at a much lower price. Again, the Admiralty manufactured their own oatmeal at the Victualling Yards. At page 20 of the Report of the Committee there was a criticism of the consumer of oatmeal. It was said that as an ordinary article of diet oatmeal was not appreciated in the Navy, and, except by stokers, was scarcely ever taken up. Therefore it was to be abolished from the dietary of the Navy. But why did not the men take up the oatmeal? It was because it was a bad article. He had seen the oatmeal himself and he declared that it was shocking to attempt to impose it on the men. It was a libel to call it oatmeal at all; it was a most inferior article. The Scotch had a world-wide reputation for making oatmeal. There were great firms in Scotland who could manufacture oatmeal very much cheaper and better than the Admiralty could manufacture it. He had been examining the Victualling Accounts and found that it cost the Government 15s. 9d. per 100 lbs. to manufacture oatmeal, while the price at which they could buy it in the open market, delivered at Deptford, was 11s. 2d. per 100 lbs., so that the Admiralty were imposing an additional tax on the poor seamen of 39 per cent. for every 100 lbs. of oatmeal supplied to them from their Victualling Yards. He was perfectly safe in saying that the additional cost of production of those articles in the Victualling Yards was from £10,000 to £20,000. Again, take ships biscuits; the cost of these, manufactured in the Victualling Yards, was 16s. 1d. per 100 lbs.; while he had it from channels that might be relied upon that biscuits as good in quality, if not better, could be purchased by the Government in the open market at 9s. 6d. per 100 lbs. Why should the Admiralty go on producing an inferior article at a cost 41 per cent. dearer than they could purchase it from outside manufacturers of the highest repute? There was another article for which the Admiralty were responsible, and that was suet. There was a general complaint throughout the Fleet that this suet was an abomination. It was not fit for anyone to consume; it was wholly insanitary; and were it not for that fact, he would press the hon. Gentleman to have a sample of it placed on the Terrace—he would not suggest the tea room—in order that hon. Members might see for themselves what a vile article it was. He had said enough to show that the whole output of the Government, excepting cocoa, was bad. But as regards that, he would suggest that some of the great cocoa manufacturers in the country would be able to produce the article the Admiralty required at a lower price than they could produce it themselves. He would suggest to the Government that they should reconsider their position as manufacturers, and that they should appoint an expert Committee to inquire into the prices for which the articles they now manufactured could be produced by manufacturers of good repute. They were commonplace products, which did not require technical knowledge, as was required in the manufacture of guns; and there were many firms of the highest reputation in this country and the colonies from which the Admiralty could draw their supplies. In conclusion, he would ask whether the hon. Gentleman was disposed to recommend to the Admiralty that they should grant an inquiry into the manufacturing side of their operations. He was perfectly satisfied that they were costly, and that it would be in the interest of all concerned that they should be discontinued. He begged to move the reduction standing in his name.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £2,292,400, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Kearley.*)

*SIR CHARLES DILKE said that this was a cross issue, and not a question as between one side of the House and the other. The real principle of the matter was that the Government should themselves supply the great bulk, indeed almost the whole, of what the men required. Then the notorious abuses of the canteen system would be removed. The Secretary to the Admiralty had himself recently seen the German Fleet; and he would be able to tell the Committee what the German system was. They knew what the American system was. He had some reason for thinking that the German system was superior to their own, but undoubtedly the American system was enormously superior. Although in the past the United States Fleet was comparatively small, yet there had been a rapid increase in recent years; and undoubtedly the feeding of the United States Navy was immeasurably superior to that of the British Navy. He could not but think that they would have to level up the quality and conditions of supply, not only in the manner suggested by the Committee, but to a much greater extent. The Committee laid down that it was the duty of the State to give the men all they needed to keep them in a thorough condition of health; and that the men should not be required to purchase additional food, but should be given a sufficient ration to keep them in health. That would get rid of the enormous amount of purchasing which existed at present. He had no experience which would enable him to say how far the men ought to be allowed to pay for canteen purchases; but if the general principle were accepted that the Admiralty should supply enough of sufficiently varied food to keep the men in health, then a great proportion of existing canteen abuses would be removed at once. No one would deny the existence of these abuses. The Secretary to the Admiralty knew the Fleet so well that he must have heard of them; and if anyone went even to Malta and kept his ears open he would hear of them there. The abuses were grotesque in their character and amount; but he doubted whether the remedy suggested by the Committee was sufficient to strike them all away. He thought they would have to go farther. In the United States Fleet there was a much more plentiful and regular supply of fresh meat, vegetables and soft bread for the men. He was certain that the baking of bread would have to become general in their ships just as it was general now in the ships of the United States Navy, where bread was baked every morning sufficient for the ship's company. There must be some grounds for the statements of his hon. friend as to the inferiority of the provisions supplied from the Victualling Yards; but he hesitated to go the whole length of his hon. friend, and to say that any inferiority of food damned the whole system of manufacturing for themselves. Was it not possible that the very abuses that they had been pointing to year after year, threw some light on the inferiority of those products. Year after year, they had said with regard, for instance, to the Deptford Victualling Yard, that men were employed even below labourers' wages to perform skilled work. His hon. friend especially excepted cocoa; and said there were fewer complaints with regard to it. Nevertheless, a few years ago a condemnation of Government chocolate on an immense scale took place at Malta. On the Estimates this year would be found a special grant to the person who supervised the manufacture of chocolate; but their complaint, year after year, was that they employed for the purposes of skilled manufacture a class of labour from which they could not expect a finished product. He would conclude as he began, by saying that the canteen abuses were very great, that they were universally acknowledged, and that they could hardly be entirely remedied by the measures proposed by the Departmental Committee. The Government must look forward to acting in the direction of the United States Government, and to greatly improve and modernise the food of the seamen.

*THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER) said no apology was needed for bringing this question before the Committee. It was a very important question; and he hoped he should be able to show, in the first place, that the discontent was not as serious as the hon. Gentleman represented it to be, and also that the Admiralty were fully alive to certain defects, to some of which the hon. Gentleman called attention. The hon. Gentleman said that there had been very great delay—three years—in carrying out the recommendations of the Victualling Committee. That was inexact on the hon. Gentleman's own statement. The Report was received in July, 1901; and its recommendations would be brought into effect in October of the present year. That was an interval of considerably less than three years. Of course, it was absolutely necessary that an important Report of this kind should be very carefully considered by several Departments of the Admiralty, and should be laid before the Treasury before any action could be taken. When those processes had been gone through, a decision was come to, very properly as he thought, by the Admiralty, and steps were taken in the direction of the recommendations in the Report. A new scale of rations was decided upon, but before it could be brought into operation, it was necessary that stocks of the provisions not hitherto included in the ration should be provided at all stations throughout the world, in order that on a given day the whole Fleet should be uniformly able to adopt the new scale. He hoped that in October they would arrive at that stage, and the improved scale would then take effect. Perhaps, however, hon. Members would like to know that the Admiralty had been able in one not unimportant particular to anticipate that date, for they had already introduced the new scale recommended by the Committee on board the home training ships. He thought no one could exaggerate the importance of giving boys, not only as much food as they required—that they had always had—but food of that description which was essential to them at their particular time of life, which he was not equally certain that they had always had. The hon. Member spoke of the quality and the quantity of the food, and of the times at which the food was taken. The Admiralty had recognised that there was room for improvement in all these respects. The character of the food was to be changed. A greater variety of food was to be included in the ration; and the additional cost, which was mentioned by the hon. Gentleman himself, might be taken as some measure of the improvement which was to be made. The meals had been increased from three to five; though it should not be supposed that at present a man did not get a meal between his supper and the time he turned in. He was always able to obtain additional food. [Mr. KEARLEY: At his own expense.] Yes, out of savings. He mentioned these points to show that the Admiralty did not appoint this Committee for nothing. The Committee took a vast amount of evidence from every class of officer and man in the service; and the Admiralty were not going to throw that information away, but were acting on it in an effective manner. Now he would come to a much more debatable matter.

The hon. Member referred to the question of canteens; and he thought that some hon. Members were probably misled by the hon. Gentleman's somewhat vehement attack on the canteen system. In reality, whatever was important in the hon. Member's indictment should be turned to quite a different direction. He should like to explain the circumstances with regard to these canteens. They had been told that there was a large amount of corruption in connection with the canteens. Statements to that effect undoubtedly appeared in the Report of the Victualling Committee, and one hon. Member stated that the corruption was aggravated owing to the fact that men who drew stores from the canteen got inferior articles, and had to pay too much for them. How did that arise? The Admiralty had always undertaken to be responsible for furnishing rations adequate and sufficient for the maintenance of the men; but it had been contended that they had misconceived the amount and the quality that fulfilled that condition; and they had agreed to give larger and more varied rations. There their responsibility ended. They could not prevent the men who had money in their pockets from spending that money in supplementing any rations that might conceivably be given. The hon. Member had contended that the supply of additional food to the men should be taken over by the Admiralty, who should create in each ship a sort of general store from which the men could purchase what they wanted. That would, perhaps, be an ideal solution; but it must be remembered that they were now dealing with the expenditure by the men of their own money, and he would undertake to say that every naval man would say that the moment an attempt was made to transfer the canteens to official direction there would be discontent on the part of the men. It was entirely in deference to the personal wishes of the men that the canteen committees were being continued. These committees were elected freely and openly by the men. They were representative of the men, and everybody who knew anything about Englishmen knew very well that they would exercise their own judgment in spending their own money, however bad that judgment might be. He was quite certain that if the feeling of the lower deck were taken, it would show that to prohibit the men from laying in a stock of provisions for their own use would create a large amount of discontent. They would immediately find that the men would complain that the articles provided for the canteen were either not suitable, or that the prices charged for such articles were more than they could afford to pay. The hon. Member had spoken of the price of the articles. It was perfectly true that many of the prices were exorbitant, but that was due entirely to the action of the committees who managed the canteens, and who were representative of the men themselves, and the men must themselves control those they appointed, seeing that they were the persons who suffered. That was the most effective remedy for the evils from which they, undoubtedly, did suffer. But the Admiralty was not blind to these difficulties. They regretted as much as the hon. Member that there should be these cases of mismanagement and corruption; which were alleged and, indeed, proved against members of the ship's company who were put in a position of trust by their own comrades. Since the Committee reported, the Admiralty had issued a circular to the whole Fleet which had done something to mitigate that state of affairs. That circular declared that mess men, ship's stewards, and others should not have any interest in canteens, and provided that the accounts should be under the direct supervision of the captain and officers, and should be audited at frequent intervals. This would deprive the members of the committees of the temptation which resulted from having supplies of moneys in their hands not accounted for. He did not know whether this circular would produce the effect they all desired; but he believed that, taken in conjunction with the larger rations the Admiralty proposed to give, it would do something. But unless and until the Admiralty saw their way to forbid men making any purchase of provisions for themselves, they could not prevent men spending their money in the way they thought best.

With regard to the quality of the rations, he thought the hon. Member had greatly exaggerated. The hon. Member had spoken of beef having been kept for something like ten years. He did not know whether there had even been an actual period of ten years, but he did know of one case where a large amount of salted beef had been bought and kept for a long period and was absolutely unfit for use, and that directly that case was discovered, steps were immediately taken to provide against a recurrence of any such thing in the future. The Admiralty had taken steps, which ought to be of great advantage, to secure a more regular turnover of all provisions, in order that they should be withdrawn before they had any opportunity of deteriorating. It was very difficult to secure a turnover of what he might term the stock victualling provisions of a ship, but the Admiralty were taking steps to see that they were turned over periodically.

MR. KEARLEY: Once in how many years?

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: That would depend on the class of provisions

MR. KEARLEY: Take beef.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER said he could not say as to salt beef, of which very little was supplied or consumed, but as to tinned beef the Admiralty had arranged to draw direct from the trade what they wanted for their war reserves, and were endeavouring to extend the arrangement still further, so that if they did not draw the amount arranged, then the trade were to pass it out of stock and sell it. With regard to flour, he entirely disagreed that the flour supplied had been bad. It was very good flour, but this was one of those cases in which what was good was not always appreciated. He believed it contained a certain amount of bran, and was what was called wholemeal flour, and though it was very wholesome and very nourishing the men did not appear to like it.

He had often had bread baked for him from this flour, and was bound to admit that when he had this flour before him side by side with the Hungarian flour which the men preferred, he rather shared the opinion of the sailors. Under the circumstances he thought the Admiralty had taken a wise course. Inquiries were now being made as to whether the flour the men desired to have could not be better obtained in the open market. The right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean had drawn attention to the fact that in the fleets of Germany, France, and other nations, bread was baked on board the ships. That had been tried upon our ships, but whether it was that we were not a bread-eating nation to the same extent as others or not, he did not know, but the practice had not been generally adopted. The Committee, after carefully considering the matter, decided that it was not desirable to have on every ship a regular installation for baking bread for the whole ship's company. The criticisms of the hon. Member for Devonport as to the quality of the food supplied were greatly exaggerated; they certainly did not apply to the flour, the pork, the cocoa, or the biscuit. The biscuit was an exceedingly palatable and excellent form of food, but he did not know whether Members would like to take it in perpetuity instead of bread; as a matter of fact the sailors did not do so. It had, however, to be remembered that in time of war it was absolutely necessary to have a store which could be depended upon as a substitute for bread when the ships were a long time away from harbour. Oatmeal had not been appreciated, and there seemed to be no reason why it should be continued as a ration. Another ration which at one time it was thought would be appreciated was dried potatoes, but that again, in accordance with the wishes of the men, it had been decided to discard.

The hon. Member, who spoke on this point with great authority, said that the cost of manufacturing some of these articles in the victualling yards was in excess of the cost to private manufacturers. While he would like to hear the other side of the question he did not seriously dispute the hon. Member's knowledge. But the Admiralty had to consider, not only the question of peace, but the question of war, and as long as the Admiralty adhered to the policy—he thought it was a good policy—of being able to supply certain of the principal stores in time of war, it was necessary to keep up in the victualling yards establishments capable of extension, with plant to enable the demand, which would be very great in time of war, to be overtaken. He did not in the least undervalue the remarks of the hon. Member; they were worth inquiring into. Indeed, if on this, or any other of the points in which he was so greatly interested, the hon. Member would give the Director of Victualling the benefit of his views, he would be heard with courteous attention, and the exchange of views would probably be of benefit. The Admiralty had really done a great deal more than the hon. Member would have the Committee believe in the way of improving the arrangements for the comfort of the men on board ship. They had improved the scale of victuals; the quantity had been increased, and the quality improved. The new scale had been introduced on the boys' training ships, and steps were being taken to ensure the freshness and the quality of the provisions to a greater extent than had hitherto been the case. Lastly, the Admiralty were taking a step which he thought would commend itself to the Committee, and certainly to the sailor. From time immemorial the sailor had used his pocket-knife to cut his provisions, and there was a time when not only the agricultural labourer, but almost every working man did the same thing. But that time had long gone by on land; and the superior refinement of modern civilisation had dictated the use of knife, fork, and plate. That innovation had been begun at sea. A certain class of the ship's company had been supplied with those really elementary utensils, but they had not hitherto been served out to the ship's company at large. Money was now being taken to provide the whole of the ships' companies with knives, forks, spoons and plates, which it was believed would be a welcome addition, and prove a great boon to the men when the new vitualling scale came into force.

SIR JAMES JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street) was glad to find the Admiralty had not lost sight of the Report on these food questions, for they were matters of great importance. One of the first duties of the Admiralty, if they desired to have efficient and contented men, was to see that the food supplied was of the best description. He recognised the difficulty of the Admiralty dealing with the canteen system when the Committee was elected practically by, and was responsible to, the men themselves, but, at the same time, having to a certain extent regulated or approved of the system, they could not altogether divest themselves of the responsibility of seeing that it was carried out satisfactorily. The system of illicit commissions was dangerous and injurious to any industry. A committee, whether connected with a ship or an organisation on shore, could not serve two masters; and he hoped the Secretary to the Admiralty would look into this question, and put a stop to the system if possible. The Government were not free from responsibility as to the class of goods supplied by these committees. Employers on shore were prohibited from having anything to do with the truck system, and the least the Government could do was to see that the goods were properly inspected. As to the stock of provisions for time of war, he could not agree that the quality was always good. During the recent war it had been noticed that whereas the food on the ships supplied by private owners was always of excellent quality, that on ships supplied by the Admiralty was often extremely bad. An officer had stated to him that he was unfortunately on board a ship where the food was from Admiralty stores, and the beef supplied to the men was disgraceful. After being boiled for two hours it was still black and hard as leather, and some of it had to be thrown overboard. There was much to be said for the abolition of the victualling yards. He agreed that instead of themselves manufacturing many of the supplies it would be better to buy them in the country, because private firms, having to face competition, had for their own sakes to keep the best qualities of supplies.

*MR. REGINALD LUCAS said that what the men wanted was not so much greater variety as increase of quantity. He asked whether there was really any *bonâ fide* provision made for supper for the men.

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) thought that when a man with the commercial skill and technical knowledge of the hon. Member for Devonport made such statements as he had done in the full light of publicity, in the House of Commons, there must be a grievance at the back of them, even though the statements were exaggerated in some particulars. The hon. Member had stated that the condition of the Navy was not so bad as had been stated, and he had said that he was fully alive to what was going on. That was only a roundabout way of endorsing the substance of the complaint of the hon. Member for Devonport. The Admiralty ought to give this question immediate consideration. Some of the grievances which had been laid before the House did not exist in the French, German, or American Navies, and what was said to be the most efficient Navy in the world, in the matter of feeding 120,000 men and boys, ought not to be behind the French, German, or American Navies in supplying an excellent variety of food. It had been said that the canteen was not an official institution, but it was recognised by the Admiralty to such an extent that the canteen on board every ship was a feature of naval life which was officially recognised, and which the officials were responsible, to some extent, for carrying on. He rose to remind the Admiralty that even if they had not officially recognised the canteen, it was such an important part of ship life, and made either for peace or discontent, that it was exceedingly important that it should be properly managed in order to stop the lower-deck grumbling and discontent which unfortunately prevailed. He believed that the right way out of the difficulty was to dispense with the necessity for these unofficial canteens by altering the variety and the quality of the food, and minimising the jobbery which existed under the present system.

The Secretary to the Admiralty admitted the high prices charged. When they heard that men had to pay from 50 to 100 per cent. higher prices for the common necessaries of life, it indicated that things were not as good on board as they ought to be. He trusted the hon. Gentleman would give this matter closer attention, and see if such abuses could not be stopped. It had been said that arrangements were being made for a better and more frequent turnover of the food. He supposed that meant that certain beef casks would be examined and if found unsatisfactory would be returned to the stores; that tinned food was to be more often inspected. He did not think that was sufficient. When tinned or salted food was considered unfit for consumption in the Navy, it should be subjected to a chemical bath and for ever destroyed. He was convinced that much of the food given to some of the soldiers on the South African transports was food that had been condemned by the Admiralty as unfit for the sailors. This food was bought up again at such places as Stepney and Mile End, and consequently the troops were fed upon condemned naval stores. But even if the soldiers were not fed upon such food, civilians had no right to be tempted by their poverty to buy those stores. He believed that the food recently condemned in the East End would be found to be the food which was considered not good enough for the sailors, although it was considered good enough for some of the alien Jews in the East End of London.

They ought to put an end to the incessant discontent and grumbling and occasional fights which the present canteen system begat aboard many of their vessels. It was the duty of the Admiralty either to abolish the canteen altogether, as at present existing, or else lay the responsibility of the chairmanship of the canteen committee upon two of the junior officers, so that the men would have some one to appeal to. He believed that if two of the junior officers were made chairman and vice-chairman of the canteen committee, they would find out the petty officers who were responsible for making the sailors pay 1s. 4d. instead of 7d. for cheese, and 1s. 8d. or 1s. 10d. instead of 9d. for tea. They should run the canteen committee under the supervision of one of the commissioned officers, and then all the cause of this discontent would be removed. He hoped the Admiralty would give the men a greater variety of food, and appoint officers to the canteen committee as he had suggested. Failing this, the Admiralty ought to remove the discontent by abolishing this unofficial canteen committee, and by seeing officially that the rations were of such a character and variety as the men below deck would be content and satisfied with. The men had a right to demand that they should be treated in such a way as to get their food as fresh and with as great a variety as possible. A French sailor was able to get cheap and fresh food, and so were the sailors in the American Navy; and if the hon. Gentleman would inquire, he would see how those navies had suppressed red-tape and brought their food arrangements up to date. He felt sure that the same thing could be done by the British Admiralty. He was indebted to the hon. Member for Devonport for raising this question, and he was satisfied that the Admiralty recognised the truth of all his statements. He asked the hon Member who was responsible to the Committee for this section of naval administration to go further than he had been willing to go that afternoon, and to overhaul the victualling yard at Deptford. If he found after inquiry that the management at Deptford was not as good as it ought to be, then he should get rid of the present management. Apart from the wages being bad at Deptford he did not believe that there was that practical knowledge of technical manufacture that the Navy demanded. He suggested that the hon. Member for Devonport, the Secretary to the Admiralty, and another practical man should form a small sub-committee to visit Deptford victualling yard in order to see if it was up-to-date; and if it was found defective a small Committee should be appointed to reorganise the victualling department.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB said he agreed that the hon. Member for Devonport deserved thanks for the persistent way he had brought this question before the House. He thought, however, that great credit was also due to the persistent efforts of a late Member of the House, Admiral Field, who, in season and out of season, had kept before the House the necessity for making an alteration in the dietary of the men. He thought it was going a little too far to say that the State could provide everything that was wanted by the different tastes of men on board ship. The policy of the Admiralty ought to be to do everything that was possible to bring the different branches of the Service together, so as to make them a homogeneous naval service, and that meant an entire change in the position occupied by the Marines. The whole trend of policy (which must end in that) was an acknowledgment that the Marine was now an anachronism and was bound to be absorbed in the Navy. In regard to the simple matter of clothing, he would point out that the State paid £4 17s. per head for bluejackets, whereas the cost per head for the unsuitable dress of the Marines was £6. If the Admiralty were to clothe the bluejackets in the same way as the Marines there would be an addition to this vote of over £100,000. The attention of the Admiralty ought to be directed to this matter. He wished to call attention to another matter, which was of some importance in promoting perfect harmony betwixt the different branches of the Service. On board ship the Marines and the bluejackets were not all on an equality with regard to victuals, allowances in lieu of victuals, tobacco, and so on. Where they were in the same naval barracks on shore they were all on an equality, but the Marine in a marine barracks was not on an equality in these matters with either bluejacket or Marine in a naval barracks and he therefore asked the Secretary to the Admiralty to look into the matter with the view to introducing a remedy. He thought the Admiralty should endeavour to equalise the conditions of the two branches of the Service when in barracks on shore.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER thought the hon. Member for Battersea was rather hard on the Admiralty in dealing with them in the spirit in which he did. As he had already stated, the hon. Member for Devonport, whose earnestness in the matter they all recognised, had in some respects rather exaggerated his case. Many of his criticisms applied only to the state of affairs prior to the Report of the Committee being received and acted upon, and the Admiralty had recognised that in many respects the old arrangements might be improved. It was a little unfair to say that all the hon. Member's remarks applied to the present state of things, when by instituting the the new scale of rations and introducing other improvements, the Admiralty were carrying out to the best of their ability the recommendations of the Committee. The Admiralty often received very good advice from hon. Members on subjects which had already engaged attention, and on which action had already been taken, and he was always glad to find that excellent advice given by hon. Members had already been anticipated. The hon. Member for Battersea had furnished him with another case in point. He said it would be a good thing if, in the effort to regulate the canteens, the Admiralty could introduce commissioned officers into the management. As a matter of fact the Admiralty already had given orders, in the Fleet Circular already referred to, that the canteens were to be administered by a representative Committee, of which the executive officer of the ship was to be *ex officio* president, and of which at least one other officer was to be a member. He attached great importance to the presence and co-operation of officers on these Committees, to see that irregularities were not allowed to occur. He wished the hon. Member, however, had been a little more explicit as to this question of canteens; for it was really a question of taking or leaving. Were they or were they not prepared to stop the existence of canteens on board ship? The Admiralty were not at present prepared to take the responsibility for the canteens on board the ships. The irregularities did not occur in respect of any of the Admiralty regulations, but on account of the differences between the various members of the Committees. He thought that it was going a little too far to accuse the Admiralty of not doing something in a matter which they had no power to control, beyond taking the steps he had already described. With regard to the question put by the hon. and gallant Member for Yarmouth as to the difference, under certain circumstances, of the treatment in respect of allowances of Royal Marines and bluejackets, he said they must have regard to the conditions of the two Services as a whole. The Royal Marines were raised under a different engagement, they had different duties to perform, different emoluments, and a different system of training from that in the other branches of the Service. The question of these allowances could not be considered apart from these other points of difference. As to the question whether it would be desirable to alter the dress, he said his impression was that the uniform of the Royal Marines was very much appreciated by the men themselves, and he had never heard of any complaint from them as to its unsuitability for the Service. The hon. Member for Portsmouth had asked a number of questions in regard to rations. The full ration for the mid-day meal had now been divided into two parts. The second portion, which was retained for the evening meal, was taken with cocoa. He understood that was regarded as a satisfactory arrangement, because, as he had more than once stated, the chief complaints that had been made in regard to the victualling were not that the food was insufficient in amount or of inferior quality, but that it was supplied at times which were not agreeable to the men or consistent wth due attention to health.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON thought that on the whole the answer of the Secretary to the Admiralty was satisfactory. His hon. friend the Member for Devonport might very well rest satisfied with the discussion he had initiated. In the circumstances he hoped his hon. friend would not think it necessary to proceed to a Division.

Mr. KEARLEY said he would withdraw the Amendment. The Committee had pointed out in their Report that the canteens were officially recognised, and therefore the Admiralty had a direct responsibility for the men getting value for their money. He asked the hon. Gentleman to bear that in mind, and see whether the grievance which he had ventilated could not be remedied. The men, also, should not be levied upon for the purchase of prizes for regattas, or for oilskins for boats' crews, which he maintained was an illegal exaction. He begged leave to withdraw his Motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original question again proposed.

Captain NORTON (Newington, W.) said he wished to draw the attention of the Committee for the fourth time to the question of the wages paid to the unskilled labourers employed at the Royal Victoria Victualling Yard at Deptford. The men worked in that yard under precisely similar conditions of employment as the men engaged by the War Office at Woolwich. Everything which had been urged with so much weight by the hon. Member for Woolwich in regard to the payment of a living wage at Woolwich held good, and was even more emphasised at Deptford. House rents were even higher than at Woolwich. Three shillings per week was the lowest price for which a decent room could be obtained, while the rent of two rooms was 8s. 6d. per week. He was aware that the Admiralty had improved the wages of these men a year or two ago by 1s. per week; that was to say, after keeping the men waiting for two or three years, and placing them in a worse position than the men working under like conditions for the War Office at Woolwich, the Admiralty had given them a rise of 1s. per week, which had improved their condition but very slightly indeed. It had been shown in the debate connected with the Woolwich workmen that 24s. was practically the lowest living wage for an unskilled labourer in the area of the county of London. He was not exaggerating when he stated that, except in the case of well-known sweaters, no employer of labour in or near Deptford, or in South London, paid less than 24s. per week. It was time the men working under the Admiralty were treated with some consideration, and he was not disposed to let this Vote pass without moving a reduction of £100, in order that it might be clearly ascertained what proportion of the Committee were in favour of giving these men the living wage to which they were entitled. At the wages now paid the best labour could not be obtained, and the coming and going of labourers in the establishment at Deptford was a detriment to efficiency, and a loss to the taxpayer. He begged to move the reduction of the Vote by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum not exceeding £2,292,400 be granted for the said Service."—(*Captain Norton.*)

Mr. JOHN BURNS said that when a similar question was raised in regard to the payment of labourers at Woolwich below the current rate, the Secretary of State for War had expressed a desire to consult with the Admiralty officials as to what the rate of pay should be at the Government establishments. He asked the Secretary to the Admiralty to go into sympathetic consultation with the Secretary of State for War with the view, if possible, of raising the wages in Deptford and Woolwich from 19s. or 21s. a week to 23s or 24s. a week. He was sure that if the hon. Gentleman did that he would have the consensus of the opinion of the House behind him. He knew that 19s. or 21s. a week for making biscuits or cocoa was below the current rate of wages in South London.

Mr. KEARLEY pointed out that the discussion the previous week had not been confined to Woolwich, but had referred to other Departments in the country. He himself had shown that the question related also to the Admiralty establishments at the home ports. It was ten or twelve years since the Admiralty had given any consideration to the wages of the poorest paid men in these establishments.

*Mr. PRETYMAN said that the pledge given by the Secretary of State for War that this question would be considered by the War Office and the Admiralty in consultation would be fulfilled. Any one who heard what had been stated in the late debate could not but have sympathy with the men who had to pay such high rents. But the question was a very large one, which affected not Deptford alone, and not the labourers alone; they could not go beyond the pledge already given.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said he was glad to hear that an inquiry would be made into the general condition of the labourers employed by the Admiralty as well as of those under the War Office. Certainly such a pledge had been given the other night by the Secretary of State for War. The Civil Lord had said that this was a large question; it was a large question, and had been often raised in this House. He congratulated his hon. and gallant friend the Member for Newington, W., for his praiseworthy persistency in bringing this matter before the House, and he hoped that good would be done. He would remind the Committee that the House of Commons had passed a specific Resolution that contractors should pay the current rate of wages; and it should not be forgotten that the House of Commons had also said, by Resolution that the Government should be a model employer of labour. If the Government were to be a model employer of labour it would not do to fall behind other employers. He did not think that up to the present moment any Government had fully recognised their responsibilities in this respect. After all, the taxpayers themselves did not desire that the Government should be a sweating employer.

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER said he wished to make it quite clear that he was not competent or authorised to vary in any way the pledge given by the right hon. the Secretary of State for War that he would consider this matter in consultation with the Admiralty.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON said he did not wish to go further than that. But the Committee understood that the Secretary of State for War had promised to inquire into the state of the labourers employed under the War Office, and they wanted the same promise made in regard to the Admiralty labourers.

Captain NORTON said he did not attach the slighest importance to the promise given by the hon. Gentleman. He had been put off year after year with such promises; and after five years he only succeeded in getting an advance of a shilling. He was now about to be put off with another promise Would the hon. Gentleman definitely promise to give the men in the Deptford victualling yard an advance of a shilling? If the hon. Gentleman would not promise that he would divide.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 76; Noes, 171. (Division List, No. 46.)

AYES

Abraham, William (*Cork, N.E.*
Allan, Sir William (*Gateshead*)
Ambrose, Robert
Bell, Richard
Bolton, Thomas Dolling
Burns, John
Burt, Thomas
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Channing, Francis Allston
Crombie, John William
Cullinan, J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M. Vaughan- (*Cardign*
Delany, William
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dunn, Sir William
Edwards, Frank
Evans, Saml. T. (*Glamorgan*)
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (*Leith*
Gilhooly, James
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hayter, Rt Hon Sir Arthur D.
Hobhouse, C. E. H. (*Bristl, E*
Holland, Sir William Henry
Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
Jones, David Brynmor (*Swansea*
Jones, Wm. (*Carnarvonshire*)
Kearley, Hudson E.
Labouchere, Henry
Law, H. Alex. (*Donegal, W.*)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leese, Sir Jos. F. (*Accrington*)
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lundon, W.
MacDonnell, Dr. Mark A.
M'Arthur, William (*Cornwall*)
M'Govern, T.
M'Killop, W. (*Sligo, North*)
Morgan, J. Lloyd (*Carmarthen*)
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Nolan, Joseph (*Louth, S.*)
O'Connor, T. P. (*Liverpool*)
O'Dowd, John
O'Mara, James
Rea, Russell
Reddy, M.
Reid, Sir R. T. (*Dumfries*)
Rigg, Richard
Roberts, John H. (*Denbighs.*)
Robertson, Edmund (*Dundee*)
Rose, Charles Day
Samuel, Herbt. L. (*Cleveland*)
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Spencer, Rt Hn. C. R. (*Northants*
Sullivan, Donal
Taylor, Theo. C. (*Radcliffe*)
Tennant, Harold John
Thomas, F. Freeman- (*Hastings*
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Wallace, Robert
Warner, Thos. Courtenay T.
Wason, E. (*Clackmannan*)
Wason, J. Cathcart (*Orkney*)
Whitley, J. H (*Halifax*)
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Wilson, Henry J. (*York, W.R.*)
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Captain Norton and Mr. Lough

NOES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Allhusen, Aug. Henry Eden
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hon. Sir H
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Man'r*
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (*Hornsey*
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (*Leeds*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Bathurst, Hon. Allen Benj.
Beckett, Ernest William
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bignold, Arthur
Bigwood, James
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bull, William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, John George
Campbell, Rt Hn J A (*Glasg.*)
Campbell, J. H. M. (*Dublin Univ*
Cautley, Henry Strother
Cavendish, V. C. W. (*Derbyshire*
Cecil, Evelyn (*Aston Manor*)
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Chamberlain, Rt Hon J (*Birm*
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn J. A (*Worc*
Chapman, Edward
Charrington, Spencer
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Colomb, Sir John Chas. Ready
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Corbett, A. Cameron (*Glasgow*)
Cox, Irwin Edwd. Bainbridge
Craig, Charles Curtis (*Antrim, S*
Cranborne, Viscount
Cross, H. Shepherd (*Bolton*)
Crossley, Sir Savile
Cubitt, Hon. Henry
Cust, Henry John C.
Dalkeith, Earl of
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Davenport, William Bromley-
Davies, Sir H. D. (*Chatham*)
Dickson, Charles Scott
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dimsdale, Rt. Hon. Sir Jos. C.
Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Hart
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Ed.
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
FitzGerald, Sir Robt. Penrose
Fitzroy, Hon. Edw. Algernon
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Fyler, John Arthur
Galloway, William Johnson
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, Hn A. G. H (*City of Lond*
Gibbs, Hn. Vicary (*St. Albans*
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (*Elgin & Nrn*
Gore, Hn G R. C. Ormsby- (*Salop*
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir John Eldon
Greene, Sir E. W. (*Bury St. Ed.*
Gretton, John
Hamilton, Rt Hn Ld. G. (*Midx*
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Henderson, Sir Alexander
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Howard, Jno (*Kent, Faver'hm*
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Kemp, Lieut.-Colonel George
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*
King, Sir Henry Seymour
Lambton, Hon. Fredk. Wm.
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*)
Lawrence, Wm. F. (*Liverpool*
Lawson, John Grant
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Fredk. N. S.
Llewellyn, Evan Henry
Long, Rt. Hn. W. (*Bristol, S.*
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Francis William
Lucas, Reg'ld J. (*Portsmouth*)
Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred
Maconochie, A. W.
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
Majendie, James A. H.
Malcolm, Ian
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Melville, Beresford Valentine
Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.
Milvain, Thomas
Mitchell, William (*Burnley*)
Montagu, G. (*Huntingdon*)

Moon, Edward Robert Pacy
Morrell, George Herbert
Mount, William Arthur
Mowbray, Sir Robt. Gray C.
Murray,RtHnA.Graham(*Bute*
Myers, William Henry
Nicholson, William Graham
Nicol, Donald Ninian
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Pease, H. Pike (*Darlington*)
Peel, Hn. Wm. R. Wellesley
Percy, Earl
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pretyman, Ernest George
Purvis, Robert
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Renshaw, Sir Charles Bine
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Round, Rt. Hon. James
Russell, T. W.
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford
Sadler, Col. Saml. Alexander
Samuel, Harry S. (*Limehouse*)
Seely,Maj.J.E.B.(*IsleofWight*
Seton-Karr, Sir Henry
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Shaw-Stewart, M.H.(*Renfrew*
Smith, Jas. Parker (*Lanarks.*)
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Jn. M.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. E. M.
Tritton, Charles Ernest
Tufnell, Lieut.-Col. Edward
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir W. H.
Wanklyn, James Leslie
Welby,Lt.-Col.A.CE(*Taunton*
Wharton, Rt. Hon. J. Lloyd
Williams, Colonel R. (*Dorset*)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. S. (*York, E. R.*)
Wodehouse,Rt.Hn.E.R.(*Bath*
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon.C.B.Stuart
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, William

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON asked whether the Government intended to take any other Navy Votes to-night.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER said not unless the Army Votes were concluded.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON said he thought they should have an undertaking that no other Navy Votes should be taken to-night.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER said he would give that undertaking.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow;

Committee to sit again this evening.

EVENING SITTING.

SUPPLY [5TH ALLOTTED DAY.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[MR. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1903-4.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £4,820,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge for the Supply and Repair of Warlike and other Stores, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

* COLONEL LEGGE (St. George's, Hanover Square) called attention to the recent Army Order limiting the use of the lance in future to ceremonial occasions, and replacing it on active service by the carbine or rifle, and the sword. He said the lance was introduced by the Duke of Wellington into the Army of this country. He had been so impressed by the value of the lance as it had been employed by the French in the wars in which he had been engaged against them, that in 1816, the year after the Battle of Waterloo, four regiments of Dragoons, the 9th, 12th, 16th and 23rd were converted into Lancers, and in the following year the 19th took the place of the 23rd, the 19th were disbanded in 1823, and the 17th became the 4th Lancer regiment. It was thirty years after their first institution they first had an opportunity of showing what they could do, the 16th got their chance in the Sikh War, the 17th got their chance in the Crimea, and also used their lances with effect in South Africa in 1881, the 9th got their chance in the Indian Mutiny, when the officers were so pleased with it that they discarded their swords and armed themselves with the lance as well as their men. In 1858 the Royal Irish Dragoons, which had been disbanded in 1798, were resuscitated and formed into the 5th Lancer regiment, and at a later period it was considered desirable to increase the Lancers, and the 21st Hussars were converted into a Lancer regiment and distinguished themselves at Omdurman in the attack on Khartoum. That was the history of

the Lancer regiments, commencing with the last century. It might be said it was ancient history, but he would remind the House that during the late war these Lancer regiments had served with great distinction, the 5th at Elandslaagte and the 9th and 16th at the relief of Kimberley, and also at Diamond Hill. Later on the lances were practically laid aside in South Africa, and the men depended entirely on the carbine with which they were armed, but that, in itself, was not a sufficient reason for discarding the lance, as the inability to use it arose principally from the fact that the Boers retreated with greater rapidity than the British could advance, and from the fact that the horses of the regiments were not in the best condition to carry out the duties which Cavalry ought to be prepared to carry out. He did not wish to protest in any way against any Army Order of this description being issued, because these Army Orders were issued by the right hon. Gentleman on the advice of those who had a full sense of the responsibility of the advice which they were giving. All he said was that if the lance was to be regarded as an obsolete weapon, then logically it ought to be deposited in the Tower, or the British Museum, and should not be carried on ceremonial parade simply as a show to the public. Personally he had very great dislike to anything in the nature of a sham.

*SIR ARTHUR HAYTER (Walsall) agreed with what had been said by his hon. and gallant friend, who had commanded with distinction the 9th Lancers, and shared with him his regret at the abolition of the lance as a weapon for active service. He had a recollection of being present at a military tournament where there were two contests between two sergeants-major of the Dragoons and two sergeants-major of the Lancers, sword against lance, and in both cases the Lancers were successful. He did not dispute the wisdom of the Army Order, but could only regret that this weapon, which had such a great history behind it, should be now abandoned. It was impossible that this question should remain where it was, and to say that the lance should be kept only for field days. He expressed doubt as to whether the War Office could, with propriety, take a Vote for a weapon which was to be practically discarded. It was not fair to make a man responsible for a part of his equipment which he was not to use. He also asked whether the carbine for Cavalry was to be done away with, and whether in the future the Cavalry were to be armed with the same rifle as the rest of the forces. He was glad to see that the sword had been disconnected from the saddle, and that men armed with the rifle would not in future be dependent on that weapon only for their defence.

* GENERAL LAURIE (Pembrokeshire, Haverfordwest) went out to South Africa during the Transvaal war of 1881, and was assured on all sides that among many causes none encouraged the outbreak more than the withdrawal of the 17th Lancers, for the Boers most dreaded what they termed the men on horses carrying spears. They dreaded the lance more than any other weapon in the field, and it counted for something if one could instil a fear of a weapon into the hearts of the enemy. When that was done they were half-way towards beating them. He thought it a most unfortunate thing that the weapon was to be withdrawn. Either they should give the soldier what he was to use on active service or not give it him at all. With regard to the barrack furniture Vote, he was curious to know what was being done with regard to fitting up the rooms of officers with furniture. Was it a promise, or was it to be a performance; and if it was to be a performance, when was it to be carried out?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Lord STANLEY, Lancashire, Westhoughton): said that the question of the abolition or the retention of the lance was one which they could not discuss with great advantage in this Committee. It was one entirely for the military experts of the War Office. But he agreed from sentimental reasons that if the lance were no longer to be used as a weapon it ought not to be retained for parade purposes. This was a matter for experts, and that being so the Committee would pardon him if he read a private letter written to Lord Roberts by Sir Ian Hamilton, who commanded a large mounted force during the South African War, and who had strongly recommended the abolition of the lance. In the letter Sir Ian Hamilton said:

> "Please may I beg of you very earnestly to show a stiff front to the reactionaries who will, I know, try to get at you over this business. The lance, though the queen of weapons in hand-to-hand combat, and though still, therefore, necessary for regiments in India, who may have to deal with swordsmen, is quite incompatible with that dismounted work which, whether in this country or on the Continent will, nine times out of ten, afford the best chances to cavalry. Woe betide the cavalry, whether in Europe, Africa, or America, who tries to use the sword or lance when the occasion lends itself to effective rifle fire. I cannot now discuss this big question point by point, but as regards the lance and its adaptability to dismounted work, just note the following. With the lance you cannot possibly, in practice, dismount more than one-half of your men, whereas with swords you can dismount two-thirds. In peace time all sorts of ingenious devices have been made to enable Lancer regiments to dismount a larger proportion of men at a time, but far the shortest and best argument for disposing of this contention will be found in the fact that, after trying their level best, officers commanding Lancer regiments in this country have had to give up all such devices in despair. Even when you have succeeded in dismounting your miserable half regiment, the mounted portion with the led horses is so hampered and helpless with the two lances per man, that in war you have actually to remount a portion of the dismounted half to serve as escort. Thus, in Lancer regiments you get considerably less than half your total numbers for use with rifles in the firing line. Then the lance makes men much slower at mounting and dismounting, for they have to change the lance over. In scouting, the Boers have a saying 'When you see a bush with a pole sticking out of it there you know are the British Paardereiters.' Theoretically, of course, the lance is carried at the trail, but practically when a Lancer regiment is scouting, the curious sight is seen of what appears to be long thin sticks moving up and down on the sky-line."

Every one recognised the great gallantry shown by the Lancer regiments; but things had changed, and the rifle had become the principal weapon in every army, whether offensive or defensive. Lord Roberts, the one man who knew best the requirements of the Indian service, was strongly in favour of the abolition of the lance; and while the disappearance of the weapon might be regretted on sentimental grounds, it was necessary in the interest of the efficiency of the Army. The new rifle would also be used in place of the carbine with which Cavalry regiments were now supplied, and then there would be a uniform arm throughout the Army.

*General LAURIE again pressed his inquiry what was being done with regard to the furnishing of officers' quarters in barracks by the War Office.

Lord STANLEY said the War Office in this matter were endeavouring to avoid doing anything hurtful to officers who owned their own furniture. They were, therefore, trying to meet the cases, not only of messes, but of individual officers, by purchasing their furniture and treating it as Government property, allowing both, however, to dispose of their effects otherwise as they pleased. In the case of officers joining, furniture was at once supplied by the War Office. But it might take years before all the barracks were furnished under the new regulations.

Mr. CHARLES HOBHOUSE (Bristol, E.) said two important reforms in the organisation of the Army had been introduced without anybody being aware of the changes; the first was the abandonment of the lance and the abolition of mountain batteries in all places outside India. Such important changes ought not to be made without something more being said than that which appeared in the most meagre Memorandum which had been presented. In his hand he held both the Memorandum of the Secretary of State and that of the First Lord of the Admiralty, and the latter though it did not disclose all the Admiralty secrets gave all the important changes likely to take place in equipment, organisation or policy during the year. He asked for fuller information of the reasons for the abolition of mountain batteries in all places outside of India. Were any mountain batteries being used at the present moment in Somaliland; because in the previous expedition they were used and found of great assistance. As he understood, it would now be impossible in the future to utilise mountain batteries unless the assent of India was first obtained for their transfer, which would entail great delay and inconvenience. He hoped the Secretary of State for War would give some definite information with regard to this. He also noticed that there was a decrease of half-a-million in the Vote for armaments for field artillery. Some explanation should be given of the decrease in the normal service of field artillery. He also called attention to the small differences in the calibre of field guns and howitzers. For these differences there was no sufficient reason, and they must sometimes cause confusion and mishap. They also vastly increased the transport and the bulk of the stores to be carried. They could only be a source of danger therefore in times of war. Gun carriages might be made with one type of wheel, and with alteration of axle might take mountain, field, and even siege guns. Similar uniformity in wagon wheels would conduce to economy and convenience. The Admiralty were doing something in the way of standardising the guns; why should not the War Office adopt a similar policy in regard to wheels? In one of Lord Roberts' earlier despatches from South Africa he mentioned that from seven miles distance three men were killed and sixteen wounded from shrapnel. General Buller, in his operations for the relief of Ladysmith, recommended a larger proportion of common shell in lieu of shrapnel. Was that recommendation to be carried out? He appealed in conclusion to the War Office to make its Memorandum more useful by clothing what was now a mere skeleton of figures with real flesh of facts, so that hon. Members might be able to get some idea of the general Military policy of the Government as apart from organisation.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, Chelmsford), as an old Dragoon, thought the War Office was right in the course taken in reference to the lance. In relation to accoutrements, he mentioned the claim of the Essex Regiment to wear the badge of the eagle. This badge was conferred on the regiment when the 44th, after the capture of a French eagle at the battle of Salamanca. They were allowed to wear it for some time, but the eagle eye of the general commanding at Colchester saw it, and he ordered it off. They were allowed to have an eagle on their colours and red tunics, but their colours were never seen on service, and the red tunics were worn chiefly for the delectation of nursemaids on Sunday. The regiment undoubtedly deserved consideration at the hands of the War Office. It was raised in the middle of the eighteenth century; it fought in 1745; it was in North America; it was at Waterloo; it took part in the first Afghan War; it fought in the Crimea; it formed part of the expedition for the rescue of Gordon; and last, but not least, it was engaged in the South African War, having the honour of forming part of the escort of Lord Roberts when he marched into Pretoria. He asked that a regiment with such a record should be allowed to wear on its service kit the distinguished badge for which, if necessary, the men were willing to pay. Seeing that the regiment garrisoned one of the towns in the constituency he had the honour to represent, he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not consider him a busybody for having thus intervened in the debate.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER (Staffordshire, Lichfield) endorsed all that had been said as to the importance of the Essex eagle, holding it was desirable that a regiment which had done such good service in the past should not have its privileges withheld from it. But he desired more information as to the abolition of mountain guns. Were they used in Somaliland or in the recent operations in Sokoto? He understood that they were not to be done away with in India, and he thought it would therefore be well to have one or two of these batteries kept in England for the training of the men who were to be sent abroad. What, however, was more important was the inconvenience arising from the variety in the sizes of field guns. Judging from an answer given by the Secretary of State for War that day, one would have thought there were only four sorts of guns in use, whereas, as a matter of fact, there was an enormous variety of guns in each class. He would like to know what progress had been made with fitting batteries with quick-firing guns. Apparently we had only fifteen batteries of quick-firing guns, which were bought in Germany. Something ought to be done to increase the number, for undoubtedly this class of gun had proved infinitely superior to other guns in active warfare.

It was of no use increasing the efficiency of the Army unless at the same time efforts were made to provide it with efficient guns. There was only one other point he wished to touch upon, and that was the question of commissariat carts. There were some hideously heavy things manufactured in large quantities at Woolwich; they lasted no doubt a very long time, but they wore out a lot of horseflesh, and in the course of the South African campaign they were found to be useless. Did the authorities intend to adopt any modification of these wagons; could they not replace them with something more modern and adaptable.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth) wished to emphasise what had fallen from the hon. and gallant Member for the Chelmsford Division. He agreed with him that anything in the way of the abolition of regimental emblems or anything which interfered with the sentiment of a regiment was to be avoided. With regard to the interchangeability of parts of artillery, he thought the War Office was now fully alive to the necessity for a nearer approach to similarity of calibre. He had been rather astonished at one remark of the hon. Member for Bristol. He had suggested that much was to be done by a simple alteration of the axle of the gun carriage.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE: For field, horse, and mountain batteries.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB said he wished to point out the extreme importance of interchangeability of guns on sea ports and naval guns, but that this was a question partly for the War Office and partly for the Admiralty, probably more for the War Office. It was monstrously absurd that the War Office should have one gun and one kind of ammunition for firing at the enemy's ships from the sea faces though our ships for the same purpose were supplied with a different kind of gun and different ammunition. The greater the progress they made in standardisation in this matter the more economical they would become. There was a heavy charge under this Vote for vessels. Did that mean for buoys and lighters, etc., or were these the vessels used for submarine mining purposes? He would like some explanation of that.

LORD STANLEY said it was necessary nowadays, in times of peace as well as of war, to have fast towing boats in order to take cargoes for purely military purposes to Gibraltar and Malta and some of our sea-port towns. By a recent invention the speed had been made to approximate to that of our cruisers, and, in addition, special winding-up apparatus was being placed on the boats. This accounted for the heavy expenditure. It was not a new departure, but a matter of old practice.

SIR JOHN COLOMB said he was talking about the £49,000 in sub-Section (*e*), which had been almost a standing charge, whereas he presumed his noble friend was referring to sub-Section (*i*.)

LORD STANLEY: No.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB said that in that case he congratulated the War Office on having made a great improvement without increasing the cost. Under sub-Section (*i*), the Vote for submarine mining, etc., amounted to £92,000, or an increase in two years of nearly £20,000. The more the Admiralty spent on the fleet to keep the sea free, and therefore to keep the ports open, the more the War Office spent on arranging to close the ports, because that was what submarine mining did. He desired again to request the War Office to represent to the Council of Defence that these charges should not properly fall on the Army Estimates.

MR. SOARES (Devonshire, Barnstaple) referred to the increase in the Vote for engineers' stores, and pointed out that whereas the Vote this year was £172,000 last year it was only £160,000, in which sum was included £41,000 in respect of the South African War, so that there was an increase in the normal services of nearly 50 per cent. There were increases in regard to submarine mining, ballooning, and railways, and a new item of special engineers' stores amounting to £42,000. He hoped the right hon.

Gentleman would give some explanation of these increases, and why special engineers' stores were included in the Vote.

*MR. LLEWELLYN (Somersetshire, N.) asked whether there was any truth in the rumour that the Light Infantry Regiments were to be deprived of the badge of the bugle. As to the order affecting only the service dress, it should be borne in mind that the Militia battalions had nothing but the service dress, and therefore if the bugle disappeared from that it disappeared altogether so far as they were concerned.

MR. WHITLEY (Halifax) said there were several instances in the Estimates of the scale of salaries laid down for various Departments not being adhered to. He instanced the case of a chief clerk, in whose case the salary was given as commencing at £300, rising by £10 a year to £400. The salary paid last year was £400; the amount taken this year was £360. That meant that a fresh person had been appointed; therefore the salary should have been £300. It was not an isolated case, and he thought some explanation should be given why the scale had been departed from. Then there was an item of £11,000 for ballooning. In connection with that, the Committee ought to have a statement from the War Office as to the success or otherwise of military ballooning in the recent war. A balloon was sent out to catch the Mad Mullah in Somaliland, but unfortunately it burst and was not likely to be of any further use. He would like to know the real opinion of the War Office as to the use of balloons in military operations.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford) said the explanation with regard to the salary of the clerk referred to by the hon. Member for Halifax was a very simple one. Whatever powers the Secretary of State might have for squandering money in other directions, he had no power over the salary of any official whatever. The scale of salaries was fixed by Parliament and the Treasury, and if, according to the Estimates, a clerk whom the hon. Member thought should receive £300 was receiving £360, it simply meant that the clerk in question was previously receiving that rate of salary in some other capacity. The reason engineers' stores now figured under this Vote was that they had been removed from one Department to another, and, instead of appearing under sub-head (*f*) they appeared under sub-head (*i*). The general disturbance was due to the adoption of the recommendations of Sir F. Mowatt's Committee, in pursuance of which large reserves were being provided, and until those reserves were fully provided it was impossible to institute comparisons with the normal figures. The hon. Member for East Bristol had made a comparison between the War Office and the Admiralty, unfavourable to the former. That did not surprise him in the least, because such comparisons were now always made to the disadvantage of the War Office. He remembered the time, however, when the Admiralty used to be compared unfavourably with the War Office, and he should live, he hoped, to the time when that event occurred again. The hon. Member for East Bristol seemed to doubt that.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE: No; I only hope that the right hon. Gentleman will live so long.

MR. BRODRICK said that if he or the hon. Member only lived the allotted span of three score years and ten he would undertake to say that that event would have occurred at least twice over. The hon. Member for East Bristol had asked why the War Office did not publish a Memorandum as comprehensive as that of the First Lord of the Admiralty. The hon. Member forgot the circumstances. When he wrote his Memorandum he had already been called to the bar of the House and tried for a capital crime for about six days during the present session, whereas the First Lord of the Admiralty sat aloft, and never had anything to bring before this House. If he had written such a Memorandum he would only have been repeating items of policy which, to the confusion of his opponents, he had already several times stated when attacked; therefore, out of sheer indulgence to the House, he had restricted his Memorandum to the narrowest limits, leaving himself some new items of information to bring out in debate. With regard to mountain guns, he thought that, considering the very few occasions on which they were needed in any expedition equipped by this country, and remembering that, after all, India was a part of the Empire, on principles of economy we must depend on India when such a case arose as to need the provision of mountain guns. As to the question of special badges for special regiments, he assured his hon. and gallant friend the Member for Mid Essex that the one thing they were anxious to do was to avoid too many changes in the service kit, which they wished to keep in hundreds and thousands to be served out to each regiment in case of mobilisation. It was a real practical difficulty in mobilising in any part of the world to keep a sufficient number of suits, not only of full dress, but also of service kits.

MR. LLEWELLYN reminded the right hon. Gentleman that Militia regiments had no full dress on which these badges could be worn. They had nothing but the service kit.

MR. BRODRICK admitted that Militia regiments were in a little different position, and he recognised that his hon. friend had a case. But he could not go further than that. His hon. and gallant friend the Member for Great Yarmouth had made a further plea that they should show more clearly what was spent on behalf of the Army and what was spent on the Navy. When the Return which he proposed to give his hon. and gallant friend was laid before the House, he thought it would be a revelation as to the relative sums spent on the two services. He would say again, however, that he did not invite these comparisons between the two services. Both were parts of one whole, and it mattered little to the country on which Estimates various items were charged if they were really necessary for the purposes of Imperial defence. But if there was the feeling that the Navy was being starved to find money for the Army, then the proposal to state clearly the amount spent by the Army on behalf of the Navy was perhaps a convenient one to adopt.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE thought the answer given by the Secretary of State for War on the points raised by the hon. Member for East Bristol was of a most perfunctory character. The right hon. Gentleman had announced in the most casual way that the mountain batteries were to be retained in India only. Were only the native mountain batteries, or were both British and Indian batteries to be retained? If the latter was the case, were no troops to be trained in the necessary duties in this country? Were there to be no reliefs going to the white battalions in India who had been trained in this country in mountain battery duties? How was it possible to abolish all the mountain batteries in the British artillery and yet retain them in India? Hitherto there had been in India two descriptions of mountain batteries—the white mountain batteries of the British artillery and the native batteries.

It was essential that they should have some mountain batteries. Surely mountain artillery was a service which ought not to be abolished without the knowledge of the House of Commons, and merely in answer to a Question in the House without any previous information being given to the House. Every other army in the world had mountain artillery, which was found to be useful not only as mule batteries, but for camel batteries. It seemed to him amazing that so complete a change should be made in this great branch of artillery in such a casual way, and that this change should be defended in the extraordinary and perfunctory way in which it had been defended; as a matter of fact there had hardly been any defence at all. The War Office was also showing a curious freedom in dispensing altogether with all previous military experience. The abolition of the lance in our Army was exactly opposite to the policy being pursued in Germany, which had decided that the lance was to be the weapon of true cavalry in the future. Those people who were opposed to cavalry altogether had abolished the lance, and the House of Commons was expected to accept that change without any argument at all in favour of it. The War Office were abolishing mountain artillery, while every other Power thought it was essential that it should be retained. Although his hon. friend the Member for Bristol had received a perfunctory answer upon some of his points, he had received no answer at all to his main point in regard to the difference in the calibre of the guns in the Army. The variety in the calibres of the guns had not been explained. When the different calibres were introduced it was looked upon as most unfortunate at the time, and no steps had been taken to do away with this difference of calibre. His hon. friend had addressed questions, which had also received no answer at all, as to the extent to which quick-firing guns had been introduced into the horse and field artillery. In 1899 his hon. and gallant friend the Member for Essex, and others, repeatedly brought before the Committee of Supply the necessity for following the example of other Powers in regard to the introduction of quick-firing guns. The Government replied that they had quick-firing guns, but it was found that they had not; and then they stated that they were making inquires into the question. Then came the war in South Africa, after which they had to buy batteries of quick-firing guns in Germany. They had been informed that even now they had not got the proper number of quick-firing guns; and the questions which had been addressed to the Government upon this subject were as important as any others in regard to military affairs, and yet no answer had been given to them.

MR. BRODRICK: A very short time ago it was argued in this House that we were spending large sums of money upon the Army in this country and not calculating the large sums we were spending in India. Now the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean tells us that we ought to have some mountain batteries of artillery, and he thinks we ought to be equipped in this respect in this country in the same way as Germany or France. It has not been considered necessary to have mountain batteries in this country. The right hon. Baronet probably knows as well as any Member of this House that a well-trained artillery is admirably fitted, with a minimum amount of training, to serve mountain artillery. We find no difficulty whatever with the artillery which we send out to India in organising the few mountain batteries which are needed for the white troops there. It would be an absurd reduplication if, when an emergency calls for it, we should not only have field and heavy artillery, but that we should keep a number of batteries ready equipped for a European war, which the right hon. Baronet is never tired of telling the House we shall never be called upon to engage in. I object to this method of blowing hot and cold, always with the aim of throwing discredit on the War Office. As to the different calibres of guns, the right hon. Baronet knows that it is impossible as modern science makes progress to secure that we shall have all over the Empire the same calibre of guns at the same moment. If the whole of the Empire was going to fight the same battle with the same ammunition and the same guns, the whole being set up on the same basis, no doubt it would be of the greatest importance to have uniformity; but there may be occasions on which a 5-in. gun might be served on the north-west of India, and when in the event of the emergency requiring it a 4·7-in. gun would be served on the Surrey hills. The War Office professes to secure uniformity in all the main calibres, and above all to take care that fresh guns are not made by the Indian Government or by ourselves which are not of the same calibre.

The right hon. Gentleman has made an unfortunate attack upon the War Office for not having sufficient quick-firing guns. It is true that the field guns we had five or six years ago could be improved upon. It is also true that the batteries of quick-firing guns the War Office obtained from Germany have been admirable for their purpose. If we felt that they were the final instalment of what we can expect to secure, we should have rearmed the whole of our artillery with those guns. But Lord Roberts believes that it is possible to improve on those guns. A variety of experiments have been made, and we believe we have now come very near a gun of excellent calibre, most suitable for the field artillery. We must be guided by experts in this matter. We hold that we are sufficiently near a better gun not to ask the House to spend a large sum on the manufacture of a less efficient gun which would be out of date very shortly. I believe that in a very short time we shall be able to propose and to commence the manufacture of a quick-firing gun of adequate calibre which will be far superior to those which we now have.

*COLONEL LEGGE said in the regiment with which he was connected there was no difficulty in dismounting three-fourths of the men. For the purpose of holding a position all the men could be dismounted, and they could hold their position as long as the ammunition lasted.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE said that he did not think the Committee could complain of the attack made by the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean upon the Secretary of State for War, because they had never been able to get any information until they had made two or three attacks upon some particular items in the Vote, and they had had to literally drag information out of the Secretary of State for War by reductions, or threats of reductions, in the War Office Votes. What had been the answer of the right hon. Gentleman? Did the Secretary of State for War not see that he was using a two-edged argument? If they were providing Army Corps to contend with Continental troops, surely they must be armed in the same way and to the same extent as the Continental troops. If it were true that every Continental army contained batteries of quick-firing guns, surely similar armaments ought to be supplied to the British troops. There was no fact which had been more emphasised during the war in South Africa than the extraordinary gallantry and devotion to duty displayed by the gunners, and everyone acknowledged the courage with which the gunners clung to their officers under the most trying circumstances. If they were going to send their Army Corps on to the Continent armed with inferior armaments to their foes, they would be handicapping that gallantry to an extraordinary extent. Therefore the argument with which the Secretary of State for War had assailed the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean, was a bad argument and would not hold water He wished to have some information about the new gun which had been alluded to. The right hon. Gentleman said that they had come very near a suitable gun. He wished to know how long it was since the War Office had begun to get near this very suitable gun. He understood that experiments with this gun had been spread over four or five years, and they had not yet arrived at a proper and suitable gun. There must be some finite period to which the right hon. Gentleman could point when either a suitable gun would be found, or at all events, when some gun must be introduced into the artillery of this country. If they could not get a perfect article, then they must produce the nearest they could get to perfection. They had been told that they were going to have a very suitable gun. He wished to know what was its calibre. Why could not the right hon. Gentleman tell them what he was doing in the direction of reducing the calibre of the guns to one common denominator? If he told them that they would not stand in the way of passing the Estimates, but he warned the right hon. Gentleman that there were a great many hon. Members who felt that unless they got the information they desired upon these points they would oppose the Estimates until these matters were properly explained to the House.

MR. BRODRICK: I take exception to the hon. Member's tone. I do not believe that any Minister has given to the House more information during the last four weeks than I have done. I am now asked to repeat information I have already given, or to give information which it is not in the interests of the public service to give. My noble friend has already told the House that we have ordered 220 4·7 guns. Of these 160 have been issued, or are ready to be issued. This shows the type of gun on which we are putting our money.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE asked whether the other guns of a similar calibre were to be abolished.

Mr. BRODRICK: I cannot undertake to abolish them if they are serviceable. I appeal to the Committee whether we should abolish every good gun we have because they are not of the same calibre as another gun. Who can be so anxious to arrive at the best type of field gun as the Secretary of State for War? The War Office will incur a great responsibility if they ask the House to spend, not several hundred thousand, but some millions of pounds on new field guns unless and until we are satisfied that we are getting the best article. We are pressing forward the matter to the best of our ability.

Mr. COURTENAY WARNER reminded the Committee that in the year 1899 the Financial Secretary to the War Office said they were getting near this quick-firing gun. Almost the same words were used in that year as had been used that evening. The Secretary of State for War had found fault with the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean for desiring to reduce the expenditure on the Army, and at the same time wishing to spend money in order to make the artillery efficient. He denied altogether that by using such an argument the right hon. Baronet was blowing hot and cold at the same time. What his right hon. friend advocated was that they should not have a large inefficient Army but a small efficient one. The Committee had been assured in connection with Item B of this Vote that only a small portion of the guns had been quick-firing guns. He thought every Power in Europe had its field artillery equipped with quick-firing guns. At a time when we were spending enormously in increasing the numbers of the Army we ought surely to expend a small amount in equipping the troops with the most approved weapons. He regarded the answer given on that point as unsatisfactory, and he hoped the Committee would hear something more about it. He believed there were four different kinds of guns in use in the British Army, and four different kinds of ammunition. He was sorry that information on these matters had to be dragged out of the War Office representatives. He asked whether the First Army Corps was to be equipped with one class of field gun. He moved the reduction of the Vote by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £4,819,900, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Courtenay Warner.*)

Mr. WHITLEY called attention to the item in the Vote for ballooning, and stated that this was a matter in which a great many Members of the Committee were interested. They had never yet had a statement from the War Office on the subject, although year by year increasingly large sums were asked for the purpose.

Lord STANLEY said the balloons used in South Africa had not been miserable failures as had been alleged. There were great possibilities in connection with ballooning, but he thought the hon. Member would understand that there were reasons why it was not advisable to give details of the experiments which were being made.

Lord ALWYNE COMPTON (Bedfordshire, Biggleswade) asked whether the hon. Member for Lichfield could explain the precise difference between the existing quick-firing guns of the British Army and those of German and French armies.

Mr. COURTENAY WARNER said he had seen the quick-firing guns which were brought from Germany. That was the only quick-firing gun we had at present. What he asked was that some further move should be made towards getting a quick-firing gun for the Army. For four years the question had been investigated, and there had been no result except the buying of this German gun. What they objected to on this side of the House was that there were still very many guns which were not quick-firing guns in the British Army.

Major SEELY (Isle of Wight) said this subject had been treated with undue levity. He quite understood that the Secretary of State for War could not give a pledge that within the next month or two he would be able to say that a new quick-firing gun would be issued to the British Army. He would, however, respectfully ask that the right hon. Gentleman should, for the benefit of certain hon. Members who took an interest in this question, give the Committee to understand that at a not very distant date a quick-firing gun would be introduced into the British Army. Otherwise he could hardly give a vote against the Motion.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE said that attention was drawn to this subject twice in the year 1899, and a promise was twice given as to the immediate adoption of a quick-firing gun in the British Army. Those promises had not been redeemed. Since then we had had the war, and everybody had become aware of the facts to which the attention of the House was called in 1899. Germany changed her gun, and so did France, and Germany afterwards changed her gun again. But the British Government had done nothing except to acquire the fifteen batteries of quick-firing guns from Germany.

MR. BRODRICK said he challenged the accuracy of the right hon. Gentleman's assertions in every particular. His remarks about foreign nations were even more inaccurate than his remarks about this country. He protested against the statement that nothing had been done by the Government. The right hon. Gentleman was simply endeavouring to create prejudice on a subject with regard to which Members on the Treasury Bench were quite powerless. They could not adopt a gun against the advice of their military advisers. They could do nothing but urge on these advisers to discover, or use every means to assist in the discovery of, a weapon which might be recommended. It was impossible that he should give the pledge asked for by the hon. Member for the Isle of Wight. Nobody desired more than he did to obtain the best gun that could be obtained for money; but how could he force on the military authorities the manufacture of a gun which they would not recommend as an improvement? He was neglecting nothing that could be done. Lord Roberts was an artilleryman, and took his present post immediately on his return from the war, and he was impressed with the necessity of a change in our artillery as soon as a really suitable gun could be found. He had called to his assistance the very best knowledge and experience he could get. The Government had, however, not yet been able —they hoped very shortly they might be able—to recommend a change which would be to the advantage of the country. But he thought the Committee would make itself ridiculous if it were to insist, at a moment when everybody was crying out for economy, on the adoption of an expensive change which the military advisers of the Government were not prepared to say was to the advantage of the country. He challenged the right hon. Gentleman's statement that since 1899 Germany had changed her gun. The British Government had neglected nothing. They had even gone to the extreme length to which British Governments could go in ordering a considerable number of batteries from abroad, because our manufacturers could not produce anything that seemed equal to them. [AN HON. MEMBER: "Much better guns."] These batteries were an improvement on our present guns, but he thought we could do better still. When that point was reached we should begin to manufacture. In the meantime he urged the Committee not to insist on the adoption of an unsatisfactory course in order to satisfy those who were in a hurry to obtain something which could not at present be obtained.

LORD HUGH CECIL (Greenwich) said he did not quite follow the right hon. Gentleman's argument. If he had said that the country was not rich enough to re-arm the Artillery, and that the re-armament should therefore be postponed a year, that would have been an argument of great weight. The right hon. Gentleman combined in a way he did not understand an argument for economy and an argument that the experts had not yet made up their minds. Of course, if the experts could not invent a better gun, then in the view of the experts the present gun was perfection. [MINISTERIAL Cries of "No; the German gun."] Well, why did we not have the German gun? On the other hand, he quite understood that the right hon. Gentleman might say that though that was a better gun we could not afford to pay for it; but he did not understand how it could reasonably be argued that there was somewhere in the clouds a hypothetically better gun for which we were to wait for ever. [Cries of "No."] Well, for an indefinite time. If it was so certain that a better gun than the present was capable of invention, surely it was possible for his right hon. friend to say that it would be invented within a definite limited time. Could he mention any day? [Cries of "No."] Well, then, what became of the whole case of the Government for the Army schemes they were putting forward? The right hon. Gentleman was prepared to run any risk, for a year, or two or three years, in the matter of artillery, not on the ground of economy, but on the ground that the ideal perfection was not yet attained, and that nothing short of that would he engage upon. His right hon. friend was under suspicion from many of them of indulging in economy in the right place in order that he might spend in the wrong place. Their objection to this was not a fatuous one, as other persons who were less intelligent than his right hon. friend and who sat behind him seemed to think. [Cries of "Oh" and "Order," and OPPOSITION laughter.] Was it insulting to say that they were less intelligent than his right hon. friend? They believed that the right hon. Gentleman was trying to save money on artillery in order that he might spend it on battalions, and that they believed to be a very unwise form of saving expenditure. He could understand the right hon. Gentleman if he would say that he would be prepared to recommend a new gun within a reasonable interval, but at present he was endeavouring to combine two incoherent arguments, and that was impossible.

MR. BRODRICK said he would venture to suggest to his noble friend that he should not treat serious matters from a jocose standpoint. He shone greatly in ecclesiastical controversy, but he would most distinctly say that in the atmosphere of military controversy, and especially on serious matters of this kind, which ought to be dealt with from a serious standpoint, the sort of criticisms the noble Lord indulged in were beside the point. His noble friend invited him to name a definite time in which to settle that a gun was fit for adoption, in order to give him and his friends an opportunity in a brief period of falling upon the War Office for their behaviour in providing something which was not up to standard. He did protest against his noble friend getting up to speak on this subject, in which he took no interest, in order to get off a few sarcasms on matters which were important. He was there to maintain not merely the policy of the country in this matter, but, when it was a matter which meant three or four millions of public money, to act with some regard not only to expert opinion, but to the public purse. He declined to fix a date according to the demand of the noble Lord, and he trusted the Committee would show that they agreed with him in that course.

SIR PHILIP MUNTZ (Warwickshire, Tamworth) said that he had listened to the speech of the noble Lord with amazement. Here were a number of gentlemen on the Ministerial side of the House crying out for economy; and then the noble Lord complained that the Secretary of State for War was not manufacturing new artillery before his expert advisers had told him which was the best gun. The noble Lord would involve the country in great expenditure, and next year his worthy friends on this side of the House—whether they ought to be there was another matter—would be criticising and cavilling at unnecessary expenditure on useless artillery. He thought the War Office had received very unfair treatment. He hoped the Secretary of State for War would stand to his guns until his experts advised him which were the best guns to manufacture, so that next year he could not be criticised for having wasted the country's money.

MR. BECKETT (Yorkshire, N.R., Whitby) said that the hon. Member's thoughts seemed to be straying far away from the House of Commons. His hon. friends above the Gangway seemed to think that they had a monopoly of sincerity, and that nobody could criticise the Army projects of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War, either in general outline or in detail, without interested or unworthy motives. That was the attitude that had been taken up towards hon. Members below the Gangway who had ventured to hint, and more than hint, that the right hon. Gentleman's Army scheme was not perfect.

Mr. BRODRICK: We do not object to criticism. What we were asking for is intelligent criticism.

Lord HUGH CECIL: We want an intelligent reply.

Mr. BECKETT said that the right hon. Gentleman seemed to think no criticism directed against his Army scheme could be intelligent; but he contended that he and his hon. friends beside him had been endeavouring to apply intelligent criticism to the right hon. Gentleman's Department for several weeks; they had brought forward argument after argument, and these had never been answered. It was not really the way to arrive at a satisfactory understanding on War Office matters to attribute motives and apply epithets to those who directed criticisms against the War Office. He ventured to urge that, considering all that had been said, it would be well to recognise that they were not to be diverted from their object—believing, as they did in their hearts, that they were acting not only in the interest of the nation, but in that of the Government—by the badinage and abuse of those whose intellects were rather atrophied by dieting upon the crumbs that fell from Ministerial tables. (Laughter, and cries of "Oh, oh!") Let those who had done so apply his observation. A large sum was asked for on the Votes for guns. (An Hon. Member: Do you mean guns in the air?) He meant the guns that were on the Estimates; and he asked his right hon. friend whether it was wise to spend so much money on those guns if there was a probability of their becoming obsolete and their being superseded by better guns.

Question put.

Committee divided:—Ayes, 51; Noes, 129. (Division List No. 47.)

AYES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Beaumont, Wentworth C. B.
Beckett, Ernest William
Bolton, Thomas Dolling
Brigg, John
Brown, Geo. M. (*Edinburgh*)
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Caldwell, James
Causton, Richard Knight
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Cust, Henry John C.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M.Vaughan- (*Cardign*
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert J.
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Griffith, Ellis J.
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Hayter, Rt Hon Sir Arthur D.
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk.
Jones, Wm. (*Carnarvonshire*)
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kemp, Lieut.-Colonel George
Labouchere, Henry
Levy, Maurice
Lough, Thomas
Malcolm, Ian
Mansfield, Horace Rendall
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Priestley, Arthur
Rigg, Richard
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rose, Charles Day
Samuel, Herbt. L. (*Cleveland*)
Seely, Maj. J. E. B (*Isle of Wight*
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Spencer, Rt Hn C. R. (*Northants*
Taylor, Theo. C. (*Radcliffe*)
Toulmin, George
Ure, Alexander
Wason, E. (*Clackmannan*)
Wason, J. Cathcart (*Orkney*)
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Wilson, F.W. (*Norfolk, Mid*)
Yoxall, James Henry

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Courtenay Warner and Mr. Charles Hobhouse.

NOES.

Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Allhusen, Aug. Henry Eden
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Right Hon. John
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Man'r*
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (*Leeds*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Campbell, J. H. M. (*Dublin Univ.*
Cautley, Henry Strother
Cavendish, V C W (*Derbysh.*)
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Clive, Captain Percy A.

Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
Colomb, Sir John Chas. Ready
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Corbett, A. Cameron (*Glasg.*)
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Cox, Irwin Edwd. Bainbridge
Craig, Chas. Curtis (*Antrim, S.*
Cranborne, Viscount
Cross, H. Shepherd (*Bolton*)
Crossley, Sir Savile
Cubitt, Hon. Henry
Dalkeith, Earl of
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Davenport, William Bromley-
Denny, Colonel
Dickson, Charles Scott
Dimsdale, Rt. Hon. Sir Jos. C.
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Hart
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Ed.
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Fielden. Edward Brocklehurst
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
Fitzroy, Hon. Edw. Algernon
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S.W.*
Fyler, John Arthur
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, Hn A. G. H (*City of Lond*
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (*Elgin & Nrn*
Gore, Hon. G. R C Ormsby (*Salop*)
Gore, Hn. S. F. Ormsby- (*Linc*
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
Greene, Sir E. W. (*Bury St. Ed.*
Gretton, John
Hamilton, Rt Hn Ld. G. (*Midx*
Hanbury, Rt. Hn. Robt. Wm.
Heath, Arthur H. (*Hanley*)
Henderson, Sir Alexander
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Howard, Jno (*Kent, Faversham*
Jessel, Capt. Herbert Merton
Johnstone, Heywood
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*
Lambton, Hon. Fredk. Wm.
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*
Lawson, John Grant
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Fredk. N. S.
Llewellyn, Evan Henry
Long, Col. Chas. W. (*Evesham*
Long, Rt. Hn. W. (*Bristol, S*
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*
Lucas, Reg'ld J. (*Portsmouth*)
Macdona, John Cumming
Maconochie, A. W.
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
Majendie, James A. H.
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Maxwell, W. J. H. (*Dumfriessh.*
Morrell, George Herbert
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Muntz, Sir Philip A.
Murray, Rt Hn A. Graham (*Bute*
Murray, Col. Wyndham (*Bath*
Myers, William Henry
Nicholson, William Graham
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Pease, H. Pike (*Darlington*)
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Pretyman, Ernest George
Purvis, Robert
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford-
Sadler, Col. Saml. Alexander
Samuel, Harry S. (*Limehouse*)
Seton-Karr, Sir Henry
Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (*Strand*)
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. E. M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir W. H.
Wharton, Rt. Hon. J. Lloyd
Williams, Colonel R. (*Dorset*)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. S. (*York, E. R.*)
Wilson-Todd, W. H. (*Yorks.*)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (*Bath*
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

Original Question again proposed.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE said that the Secretary of State for War had stated he was there not only to defend the policy of the Government but the pockets of the taxpayers; but the Vote they were now considering showed that the right hon. Gentleman was not only not defending the pockets of the taxpayers, but depleting them. The normal expenditure for transport, as distinct from war expenditure, was £119,000, but the right hon. Gentleman, in pursuance of his policy of protecting the taxpayers' pockets, now asked for £207,000 for transport. Some explanation of this item ought to be given.

MR. BRODRICK said that this was for a portion of the transport used in the South African War which did not come into course of payment till this year.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE said that he was obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for his courtesy, but it would curtail debate if further explanations were made. After spending nearly £2,750,000 for the purchase of transport wagons during the South African War, why was there still a charge of nearly £100,000 more than in normal times for these vehicles? In 1899, when Lord Roberts went out to South Africa, he discovered that the transport of the Army was governed by the regulations of 1898, and was in a state of chaos, and he changed the system from regimental to departmental transport. Since that time no new regulations had been issued governing the organisation of the transport of the Army. What he wanted to know was whether the old system of regimental transport had been abandoned, and a new departmental system organised in its place.

MAJOR RASCH said he hoped the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War would give him a more or less satisfactory answer in regard to the claim of the Essex Regiment to wear the badge of the Eagle, if the regiment paid for the badge themselves.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE said that as the right hon. Gentleman had not given him an answer he begged to move the reduction of the Vote by £200.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £4,819,800, be granted for the said service."—(*Mr. Charles Hobhouse.*)

LORD STANLEY said it was almost mpossible to give the hon. Gentleman a definite answer. The question of transport had been very much debated, and there was great diversity of opinion with regard to it. The war in South Africa undoubtedly showed that, although in some instances regimental transport was the best, still, for the general purposes of transport, it was better to have brigade transport. Without actually abolishing the whole of the regimental system of transport, they would endeavour, as far as possible, to have the transport arranged for brigade service, allowing it to be supplemented by a certain amount of regimental transport.

MR. BECKETT said he thought it was a matter for urgent investigation as to whether the inspectors appointed by the War Office should be given the power of inspecting work carried out by contractors during the course of manufacture. There appeared to be a difference of opinion on the subject, and he should like to know what conclusion the right hon. Gentleman had arrived at. It had been shown that owing to the absence of inspection during the process of manufacture of particular articles, no responsibility rested on anyone until the articles were handed over to the Departments concerned, when complaints were very often made as to their quality and character; and it was thought that, in order to avoid that, inspection should be allowed during the process of manufacture. The reason given against it was that there would be danger of collusion between the contractors and the inspectors. But that was overrated. Certainly inspection would prevent loss and delay; and would prevent such a mishap as the supply of 200,000 tent mallets, the handles of which would not fit the heads. Inspectors were also not allowed to exercise reasonable discretion in the passing of goods not according to specification. The articles might slightly deviate from the specification, but an inspector who knew his business would see at once whether that deviation was important or not. It was also complained that the War Office inspectors were not ready to take responsibility in passing articles which deviated from the specification, and consequently there was frequently considerable delay. Curiously enough, the inspectors appointed by the War Office were far more unwilling to exercise responsibility than the inspectors appointed by the Admiralty. Evidently the atmosphere of the Admiralty was more favourable to the exercise of responsibility than the atmosphere of the War Office. It was peculiar that inspectors were discouraged from doing the very thing at the War Office which they were enjoined to do at the Admiralty.

MR. WHITLEY said he wished to press for a reply to the question raised by his hon. friend with reference to the transport vehicles, on which no less than £2,750,000 was spent during the war. He wished to know what had become of them. Were they in store; or had they been disposed of; and, if disposed of, for what amount?

MR. BRODRICK said that a very large sum had been obtained from the Colonial Government for the wagons used in the war; and the country obtained a much better bargain by disposing of them than by keeping them in store after service in South Africa. The arrangement between the War Office and the Colonial Government was a very fair bargain. With reference to the questions of his hon. friend, he fully realised the importance of the suggestion made by the Committee of which his hon. friend was a member, both as to constant inspection during construction, and as to reasonable discretion being given to inspectors. That had gone much further since his hon. friend inquired into the question, and would be further increased.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE said he would ask leave to withdraw his Motion.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

2. £1,745,000, Pensions and other Non - Effective Charges for Warrant Officers, Non - Commissioned Officers, Men, and others.

3. £195,000, Civil Superannuation, Compensation, Compassionate Allowances and Gratuities.

Resolutions to be reported.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £530,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge for the Pay, etc., of the Medical Establishment, and for Medicines, etc., which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

LORD HUGH CECIL said he wished to ask a question with reference to a matter which was creating a great deal of anxiety in the country, and that was as to pensions and gratuities given to those wounded in the War; and also as to what was being done for the relatives of those killed in the War. The matter had often been brought before him by his constituents; and he should be very much indebted if the Government would make a clear statement on the subject.

LORD STANLEY said that with regard to pensions for wounds, each case was dealt with on its merits by the Chelsea Hospital Commissioners, which were distinct from the War Office. It was better that these cases should be decided by a practically independent body on which, of course, the War Office was represented. It was impossible to give any regular scale. As a general rule a man was given a temporary pension for a year with a view to seeing how far he recovered at the end of that time and became fit to earn a livelihood. If the disability was shown to be permanent the pension was then fixed. There was a regular scale for widows and children. The widow of a sergeant received 7s. 6d. a week and 2s. for each child, the widow of a corporal 6s. a week and 1s. 6d. for each child, and the widow of a private 5s. a week and 1s. 6d. for each child. In cases in which children were left motherless double the rate per child was given to those who were looking after them. The same rate was given when it was found necessary to remove children from their mothers.

Sir WILLIAM TOMLINSON (Preston) asked up to what age the gratuities were paid.

Lord STANLEY said up to the age of fourteen or sixteen.

Mr. COURTENAY WARNER asked if the pensioner were informed that his pension was only temporary. He was aware of a case where a man only knew that his pension was temporary when it ceased.

Lord STANLEY said all pensioners were informed that their pensions were temporary, and that they would be required to come up again for medical examination.

Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) moved to report Progress. The Vote was of some importance, and many hon. Members who were interested in it were not present.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress; and ask leave to sit again."—(*Dr. Farquharson.*)

Mr. BRODRICK said he did not think the proposal unreasonable.

Question put, and agreed to.

The Clerk at the Table informed the House that Mr. Speaker was unable, owing to indisposition, to resume the Chair

Whereupon Mr. Jeffreys, the Deputy-Chairman, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker in pursuance of Standing Order No. 1

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow; Committee also report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

Adjournment.

Motion made, and Question "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Sir Alexander Acland-Hood*)—put, and agreed to.

Adjourned at five minutes before Twelve o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 31*st March*, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, owing to indisposition, and of the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of Ways and Means.

Whereupon Mr. JEFFREYS, the Deputy Chairman, proceeded to the Table, and, after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Great Northern and City Railway Bill, reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

STANDING ORDERS.

Resolutions reported from the Select Committee.

1. "That, in the case of the Maidstone Gas Bill, Petition for additional Provision, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with. That the parties be permitted to introduce their additional Provision if the Committee on the Bill think fit."

2. "That, in the case of the Baker Street and Waterloo Railway (Extension of Time) Petition, for leave to deposit a Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with; that the parties be permitted to deposit their Petition for a Bill."

3. "That, in the case of the Jewish Colonisation Association Bill [Lords], the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with; that the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill."

4. "That, in the case of the Birmingham District Tramways Bill [Lords], the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with; that the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill, provided that the powers to construct Tramways Nos. 1, 1A, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 be struck out of the Bill, unless the consent of the County Councils of Warwickshire and Worcestershire be proved before the Committee on the Bill; that the Committee on the Bill do report how far such Order has been complied with."

Resolutions agreed to.

GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY BILL.

WATFORD AND EDGWARE RAILWAY BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PETITIONS.

BANKRUPTCY LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Halifax, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Petition from Dublin, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Petitions in favour:, from Hedon; Peterborough; Exeter; York; Wolverhampton; Middlesbrough; Tynemouth; Halifax; Glossop; Preston; Bradford; and Leicester; to lie upon the Table.

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Dallas; in favour; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION IN THE METROPOLIS.

Petitions for legislation: from Camberwell; and London; to lie upon the Table.

INNKEEPERS' LIABILITY BILL.

Petition of the British Temperance League, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Kirkcudbright, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC HOUSES (HOURS OF CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Glasgow, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

Petitions against: from Middlesbrough; Settle; Benwell and Fenham; and Ryton; to lie upon the Table.

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.

Petitions against Establishment: from Strathpeffer; Kilmarnock; Thornhill; Forres; Alva; Huntly; and Linlithgow; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.

Petitions against: from Melton Mowbray (two); Sheffield; Deptford; Portsmouth; Southend; Barry Dock; Peckham; Clacton-on-Sea; Cardiff; Chelmsford; Birmingham (two); Bethnal Green; Brixton; Loughborough; Stoke Newington (three); Lavender Hill; Herne Bay; Canterbury; Hammersmith; Mexborough; Cheltenham; Boston; Chelsea; Bristol (three); Eastville; Ilkeston; Kingswood; Bedminster; Victoria Dock; Custom House; Stratford; Walthamstow; Shepherds Bush; Gainsborough; Harringay; Edmonton; High Wycombe; Alfreton; Tottenham; Queen's Park; Faversham; Edmonton Green; Leyton; Basingstoke; West Green; and Leicester; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Pontypool; Wandsworth; Seaford; Leek; Godmanchester; Newcastle-under-Lyme; and Heywood; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TREATY SERIES (No. 4, 1903).

Copy presented, of Convention between the United Kingdom and the United States of America for the adjustment of the boundary between the Dominion of Canada and the territory of Alaska. Signed at Washington 24th January, 1903. Ratifications exchanged at Washington 3rd March, 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

RAILWAYS ABANDONMENT.

Copy presented, of Report by the Board of Trade respecting the Humber Commercial Railway and Dock Bill and the objects thereof [pursuant to Standing Order 158A]; referred to the Committee on the Bill.

ILLICIT DISTILLATION.

Return ordered, "by Districts and Counties for the years ended 31st March, 1900, 1901, and 1902, respectively, showing the number of seizures and detections of illicit plant, materials, etc., in Ireland by members of the Royal Irish Constabulary; the number of persons prosecuted; the number convicted; the number committed to prison; the amount of fines imposed; the amount of fines recovered; and the amount of rewards paid to members of the Royal Irish Constabulary; also similar information as to seizures and detections by Inland Revenue Officers in England, Scotland, and Ireland during the same periods."—(*Mr. O'Mara.*)

ARMY EXPENDITURE.

Address for "Return showing, approximately, the classification of Army Expenditure provided for in the current Estimates (1903-4), excluding non-effective charges, under the following heads and sub-heads: I. on provision for field services (a) available for Imperial and general service, (b) for Home service only; II. on provision for fortress service (c) Abroad, (d) at Home; and III. on provision for aquatic and submarine services."—(*Sir John Colomb.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Scottish National Gallery—Supplementary Estimate.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if it is proposed to issue a Supplementary Estimate for a purchase grant for the Scottish National Gallery during the coming financial year.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) Until a Report is received from the Committee appointed to make inquiries with regard to the Board of Manufactures, it would be premature to make any statement on the subject.

Wireless Telegraphic Communication between Dover and the East Goodwin Lightship.

MR. DOUGHTY (Great Grimsby): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, seeing that Dover is now a wireless telegraph station under the coastguard, he will take steps to have the East Goodwin Light-vessel fitted up with the necessary apparatus for life-saving information, in view of the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Electrical Communication.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour*). The Board of Trade are fully alive to the importance of this question, and they have made efforts to bring about an arrangement for the transmission of information by wireless telegraphy from the East Goodwin Lightship. Their efforts have not so far been successful, however, as the terms upon which the use of wireless telegraphy apparatus should be allowed have not yet been settled between His Majesty's Government and those interested in the invention.

Wrecks off the Irish Coast.

MR. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green): To ask the President o the Board of Trade if he will state what steps have been taken to ascertain the positions of the wreck of the "Marlay," off Dublin Bay, and the "Upupa," off Ballycottin; and whether any, and what, notices to mariners warning them of these dangers were issued.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) I am informed by the Commissioners of Irish Lights that attempts, extending over several days, have been made to ascertain the positions of these wrecks. Further investigations will be continued as soon as the weather permits. As these attempts have proved unsuccessful it has not been possible to issue any notices to mariners.

Opening of Picture Galleries on Sundays.

MR. ASHTON (Bedfordshire, Luton): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Museum, and the Natural History Museum are open on Sundays throughout the year, while the National Gallery, the Tate Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery, and the Wallace Collection are not open on Sundays during the winter months; and, if so, will he state whether there is any special reason for this difference; and, if not, whether he can arrange for the opening of all these public galleries on all Sundays throughout the year.

(*Answered by Mr. Hayes Fisher.*) Owing to the frequent deficiency of daylight in winter afternoons, and the fact that, in any case, the time during which pictures could be seen is very short, it is not considered worth while, in the absence of artificial light, to keep the galleries open on Sunday afternoons all the year round. As regards the question of introducing artificial light, I understand that at all events, in the case of the National Gallery and the National Gallery of British Art, the Trustees entertain a strong objection, apart altogether from the question of expense; and I am not prepared to press them or the Trustees of the other Galleries upon the point.

Improved Postal Facilities in Essex.

MR. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that there is no second delivery of letters in the parishes of Pebmarsh, Lamarsh, and Alphamstone in Essex, whilst the neighbouring parishes possess such a delivery; and whether, seeing that these parishes are within fifty miles of the General Post Office, and in view of the commercial needs of the population, he will endeavour to establish a second delivery and thus enable them to receive the London daily newspapers on the day of issue.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) I have recently given careful consideration to the question of affording a second delivery of letters at Pebmarsh, Lamarsh, and Alphamstone, but I regret to find that the circumstances do not warrant the additional expense involved.

French Fishing-Boats off the Cornish Coast.

MR. HAIN (Cornwall, St. Ives): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for

Foreign Affairs whether, in view of the injury done to Cornish fisheries by French fishing-boats engaged in crab and lobster fishing near the Seven Stones, and seeing that the Seven Stones Lightship is maintained by the Trinity Board, he will state upon what grounds the Foreign Office have refused to take steps for the protection of the Cornish fishermen.

(*Answered by Lord Cranborne.*) I need not say that His Majesty's Government greatly regret any injury which may have befallen the Cornish fisheries in the matter to which my hon. friend refers; but the Foreign Office has been unable to take any steps to prevent it. We are advised that the fishing off the Seven Stones is not within British territorial waters, and the right of foreign boats to fish there cannot therefore be contested.

Irish National Education.—Resolution of Catholic Managers.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Commissioners of National Education will give effect to the resolutions of the Association of Catholic Managers of the Ecclesiastical Province of Armagh; and if the Commissioners will consider the advisability of reverting to the old regulation that an average attendance of thirty-five pupils qualified for the salary of the highest grade.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The resolutions were considered by the Commissioners. One of the resolutions recommended a reduction to fifty of the average required for an assistant teacher. This proposal would involve an additional charge of £24,000 per annum on the Estimates for Public Education. Additions of so large a character should, in the opinion of the Irish Government, be considered in relation to all other demands that may be made in respect of education in Ireland. The resolution relating to the supply of requisites has been carried out so far as manual instruction and elementary science are concerned. Other resolutions had relation to the teaching of Irish, the historical and geographical readers, and these matters have since been dealt with. The resolutions in respect to the promotion and initial salaries of teachers could not be given effect to on the ground of cost. The average of thirty-five under the old regulations did not warrant salary of the highest grade. It merely warranted first-class salary, which is different from salary of the highest grade under the new regulations.

Delay in Erection of Labourers' Cottages in County Armagh.

MR. JOHN CAMPBELL (Armagh, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the fact that a sum of over £2,000 has been allocated by the Local Government Board towards the building of labourers' cottages in the vicinity of Newtownhamilton, County Armagh, that the sites have been approved by the Local Government Board inspector, and the scheme passed by the District Council, he will explain the cause of the delay in commencing the work.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The hon. Member has been misinformed on some points. The District Council proposes to erect a number of cottages in the neighbourhood, but the scheme was only forwarded to the Local Government Board on the 13th instant. The estimated cost of carrying out the scheme is £2,200. No money has been allocated by the Board towards building the cottages, and it is premature at the present stage to say what will be the amount of the loan ultimately required by the Council. The inspector has not approved of any sites for the cottages; the necessary local inquiry into the scheme has not yet been held.

R.A.M.C.—Allowances to Officers undergoing professional course.

DR THOMPSON (Monaghan, N.): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he is aware that the captains of the Royal Army Medical Corps now attending a professional course in London, and residing at the temporary college in the Hotel Belgravia, receive an allowance at the rate of 5s. 6d., although lieutenants on probation receive an allowance at the rate of 9s.; and if he will give directions to remove this difference.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) Lieutenants on probation receive allowances for servants, lodgings, and fuel and light, amounting to about 4s., and also draw a mess allowance of 4s. Captains draw the former class of allowances, amounting to about 5s. The question of the grant of the 4s. mess allowance to them is under consideration.

Established rank for Gun Wharf Employees.

MR. REGINALD LUCAS (Portsmouth): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can arrange for a proportion of the men employed in His Majesty's gun wharves being granted established rank, with pension, as in the case of His Majesty's dockyards.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) Pension rights have been granted to principal foremen and others of corresponding rank in all sections of the Ordnance Department at home stations, and will shortly be granted to 35 per cent. of the foremen. As regards labourers and mechanics it is considered better, in the interests of efficiency and economy, to pay such rates of wages as are found necessary to secure the services of good workmen, without pension.

Crimean and Indian Mutiny Pensioners.

SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee): To ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office if he will give the numbers of pensioners who served in the Crimean campaign and the Indian Mutiny, stating the rates per day and the number receiving each rate.

(*Answered by Lord Stanley.*) The number of men drawing special campaign pensions is as follows:—2,800 at 9d; 280 at 10d.; and 221 at 1s. There are also a number of men who received special increases of pension, and whose pensions are now as follows: 79 at 1s.; 170 at 1s. 3d.; 626 at 1s. 6d.; and 44 at 2s. Among the ordinary pensioners are also a large number of men who served in the Crimean campaign and Indian Mutiny. As a list of these would involve an examination of each individual case it is impossible to sanction its preparation.

Royal Commission on Volunteer Service—Representation of Volunteer Medical Officers.

MR. REMNANT (Finsbury, Holborn): To ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he will consider the advisability of including a Volunteer medical officer among the members of the Royal Commission to be appointed to consider the Volunteer Service.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) I fear I cannot promise to include officers of the various departmental corps on the Commission.

Metropolitan Asylums Board—Treatment of Imbecile Children.

MR. REMNANT: To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the proposal of the Metropolitan Asylums Board to remove the improvable imbecile children back to the Darenth Asylum, where unimprovable children are retained; and, if so, what steps he proposes to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) I have received from the Managers of the Metropolitan Asylums District a proposal with regard to imbecile accommodation and classification at Darenth. Their proposal seems to be that the present schools should be used as a training school for improvable children; that the present adult asylum should be used as an industrial colony for improvable adults; and that the pavilions should be utilised for the quite unimprovable younger patients until such time as these buildings would be needed for the extension of the industrial colony. The Managers propose that the Brighton Road Schools at Sutton should be used for the accommodation of unimprovable imbeciles. It is necessary for me to obtain further information before I can form a definite opinion with regard to the proposal, and I am at present in communication with the Managers on the subject.

Local Education Schemes—Suggestions by the Board of Education.

MR. HUMPHREYS-OWEN (Montgomeryshire): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education if he will state what steps the Board have taken, or will take, to make it clear to local education authorities that suggestions made by the Board or any of its officers before formal publication of draft schemes to local education authorities, or to any persons acting on behalf of such authorities, are hortatory only and not mandatory.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) The Board, at the commencement of this year, sent a Memorandum to the local education authorities stating what were the requirements of the Act, and what were the duties of the Board in respect of schemes. Later, in response to various applications, the Board sent to the local education authorities a Memorandum containing suggestions as to the various modes in which Education Committees might be formed and constituted. The Board do not think that there is any opening for the sort of misconstruction suggested in the Question.

Board of Education Typewriting Department—Age of Superintendent.

Mr. TOULMIN (Lancashire, Bury): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education if he will explain why it is proposed to appoint as superintendent of the Typewriting Department to be formed at the Board of Education a lady who is over the age prescribed by the Treasury Minute of 17th March, 1894.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) In forming a new section of women typists, the Board of Education think it advisable to place in charge a lady of experience. The Treasury have expressed their agreement with this view, and have given their consent to the appointment.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Volunteer Artillery Armaments.

Mr. BROADHURST (Leicester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the City of London First Volunteer Artillery Regiment is still drilled with muzzle-loading guns; and, if so, whether he will endeavour to supply them with more modern weapons.

The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford): This corps has had one 5-inch breech-loading gun since October last. Four 6-inch breech-loading guns have been ordered for issue to the corps. Similar ordnance are available for the corps at the Tower of London.

Mr. BROADHURST: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the gun now in the possession of the corps is useless; that many of its parts and carriage are defective, and that it is, therefore, of no use whatever?

Mr. BRODRICK: I am not aware of that, but I will make further inquiries if the hon. Member puts another Question on the Paper.

Mr. SEYMOUR ORMSBY-GORE (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the new regulations on fire discipline recently issued to the Volunteer Artillery are rendered nugatory and impracticable by reason of the obsolete guns?

Mr. BRODRICK: I do not know whether my hon. friend realises the number of Volunteer Artillery in this country, and that it would be impossible, except at enormous cost, to give modern weapons of heavy type to all of them. If we were to do so, we should have a far larger quantity of heavy artillery than we could use in time of war.

Mr. SEYMOUR ORMSBY-GORE: But two years ago the right hon. Gentleman promised that the whole of the Volunteer Artillery should have modern armament.

Mr. BRODRICK: No; I never made any such promise. What I said was that 200 4·7 guns should be distributed as soon as they were available. That is being done.

Army Expenditure.

Sir JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will grant the Return relative to Army Expenditure standing on the Notice Paper to-day.

MR. BRODRICK : The Return will be granted, but it will take some little time to prepare.

Service in the Army.

COLONEL WELBY (Taunton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state how many of the 210,600 effectives, estimated for Regular Forces (Regimental), Home and Colonial, had more than one year's service; and how many were twenty years old and upwards on 1st January, or at the last convenient date when service and age returns were rendered.

MR. BRODRICK: On the 1st January there were 41,586 rank and file with less than one year's service, excluding drafts on board ship, and there were 41,199 rank and file under twenty years of age. These figures are inclusive, as most of those under one year's service are also under twenty years of age.

Age of Troop Horses.

COLONEL WELBY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state how many of the 9,022 troop horses on the establishments of Household and Line Cavalry at home were six years old and upwards on 1st January, or at the last convenient date on which returns of age were rendered.

MR. BRODRICK: The figures 9,022 include regiments abroad other than in India. The number of horses on the strength at home on 1st March was 6,207, of which 5,008 were six years of age and upwards.

Royal Garrison Regiment and the Recruiting Returns.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL LAURIE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state whether the men enrolled for the Royal Garrison Regiment are reckoned among the recruits raised during the past year; and, if so, whether in any calculation of age or physical qualification these men, who have already completed a period of service in the Army, are brought into account.

MR. BRODRICK: No, Sir. The men enrolled for the Garrison Regiment are not reckoned as recruits or included in any calculation as to the age or qualifications of recruits.

Army Discipline on Active Service.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL LAURIE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will consider the advisability of calling upon officers who have commanded regiments in the field to furnish reports as to the efficiency of the methods now available for the maintenance and enforcement of discipline in the Army when on active service before the enemy.

MR. BRODRICK: The question of the maintenance and enforcement of discipline on active service is at present being dealt with by a Special Military Committee.

Dublin Fusiliers—Private Meehan's Case.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether any unpaid gratuities are due to Mrs. Meehan, of Longford, in respect of the death of her son, Private James Meehan, late of the Dublin Fusiliers, who was killed in South Africa; and whether, in view of this woman's circumstances, he will direct a grant to be made to her out of the funds available for that purpose.

MR. BRODRICK: No unpaid gratuities are due in respect of this estate. There are no funds at my disposal from which a grant could be made to Mrs. Meehan.

A NATIONALIST MEMBER: He was only a common soldier.

2nd Battalion King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL LAURIE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will consider the advisability of allowing the detachment of the 2nd Battalion of the King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment, which has taken part in the war and is now on passage from South Africa in the "Ionian," and which is to be transhipped at Gibraltar to join the 1st Battalion, to return home with the regiment, and obtain furlough to visit their friends before being sent out to join the linked battalion.

MR. BRODRICK: I should be very glad to accede to this request, but I am afraid that I cannot consent to treat the men of this regiment preferentially to those of other regiments in this respect, or to throw upon the public the extra cost of conveying these men home and back again.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL LAURIE: Could not the ship in which they are coming from South Africa bring them home without extra cost?

No answer was returned.

Water-tube Boiler Royalties.

SIR WILLIAM ALLAN (Gateshead): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he will state the amount that has been paid as royalty to De Launay, Belleville, and Co., from and including H.M.S. "Powerful," and "Terrible," to the latest ship fitted with Belleville boilers; and whether he will explain why half the royalty was paid on the water-tube boilers intended for His Majesty's vessels "Queen," "Berwick," and "Cornwall," although the boilers were never manufactured by Belleville and Co. for these ships; and what was the amount of the half-royalty paid.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER, Belfast, W.): The total amount which has been paid in royalties is £169,282 5s. 1d. The conditions as regards payment of the royalty for the boilers of the three ships in question provided for an instalment of one-half the royalty being paid upon the orders being placed for the construction of the machinery. Payment was accordingly made as soon as the orders were placed. Upon the receipt of the preliminary report of the Boiler Committee the Board decided to replace the boilers by those of other types, and the orders for the Belleville boilers were accordingly cancelled. The Admiralty was advised that Messrs. De Launay, Belleville and Co. were under no liability to repay the amounts paid. No other action was possible. The total amount of the half-royalties in question was £4,582 13s. 4d.

Taxation on South African Natives.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, Cleveland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will say when the Return on the rates of taxation paid by natives in British South Africa, ordered on 24th February, will be presented to the House.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): The information required has been in part received, and the return will be laid when it is complete. I have telegraphed to inquire when I may expect the complete information.

Lendy Estate, Rhodesia.

MR J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any report has been made to him as to the sale of the Lendy Estate in Rhodesia, a portion of which belonged to the late Mr. James Murray, who was a trooper in the colony, and purchased under the name of M'Gowan or M'Gavan; whether the Executor Dative has been able to dispose of the estate; and, if so, whether he can state the amount likely to be available for the representatives of the deceased.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The Master of the High Court of Southern Rhodesia states that Murray's one-tenth undivided interest in Lendy's Estate is practically valueless, owing to the heavy accumulation of unpaid quit rent and other charges, and the fact that the terms of the title regarding *bonâ fide* occupation of the Lendy Estate have not been complied with, and that transfer cannot be passed to any purchaser owing to the whereabouts of many of the remaining joint owners not being known. A full report is on its way and I will communicate with the hon. Member on its receipt.

Butter Adulteration.

MR. SOARES (Devonshire, Barnstaple): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, in respect of the persons prosecuted for selling butter containing more than 16 per cent. of water, he will say whether any farmers were so prosecuted; and, if so, in what counties and in what month of the year the offences were committed.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of AGRICULTURE (Mr. Hanbury, Preston): No complete information is available as to the number of prosecutions instituted in respect of the sale of adulterated butter since the 15th May last, when the Sale of Butter Regulations came into operation. In only one out of the thirty-five cases which have come under our notice has the defendant been described as a farmer. In that case the butter was sold in Lancaster on the 31st May last.

Education Act.

Mr. ELLIOT (Durham): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Board of Education, if he can state what steps he proposes to take in view of the refusal of the County Council of Durham to put the Education Act in force in that county before April 1904.

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the BOARD of EDUCATION (Sir William Anson, Oxford University): The County Council of Durham, in common with some other councils, are desirous of making inquiries and preparations which may occupy a considerable time before bringing the Act into operation. In view of the possibility that the difficulty anticipated by these councils may have been over-estimated, the Board of Education have declined in any case to fix a later day than the 30th September; but a further postponement can be granted, and will be granted, if necessary.

Lehud Harbour, County Kerry.

Mr. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the entrance to Lehud Harbour, County Kerry, has been inspected by any official of the Congested Districts Board; and whether it is proposed to remove the rocks, in view of their danger to fishermen and the loss of life that they have caused within the last few years.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. Wyndham, Dover): The Board has, at present, so many works in hand, or in respect of which contributions have been promised, that it cannot undertake to incur expenditure at Lehud in the financial year commencing to-morrow. In these circumstances the local inspection has been postponed.

Ireland—Industries at Sneem.

Mr. BOLAND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is now in a position to state what assistance the Congested Districts Board is prepared to give in order that a carding factory may be set up in the neighbourhood of Sneem, County Kerry, to deal with the local wool and encourage home spinning and local weaving.

Mr. WYNDHAM: Since this Question was placed on the Paper, the hon. Member has been supplied, I understand, with a copy of the Report made to the Board on this subject by its Inspector. That Report explains the difficulties to be met in undertaking a project of the kind suggested. Any further representations which the hon. Member may wish to make in the matter will be duly considered by the Board.

Irish Crimes Act Disqualifications.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the fact that fourteen persons have been disqualified from sitting or acting as county and district councillors in Ireland by reason of sentences imposed on them under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, the Government will propose legislation to remove this disqualification, or give facilities to enable private Members to pass such a Bill.

Mr. WYNDHAM: No, Sir; I do not contemplate introducing any such legislation.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: As several Members of Parliament are among those thus disqualified, are the Government prepared to give us a day to discuss the policy which brought about the disqualification ?

Mr. WYNDHAM: That Question should be addressed to the Leader of the House. The disqualification depends on a statutory enactment.

Mr. CULLINAN (Tipperary, S.) was understood to ask if the right hon. Gentleman had not embodied in his Land Bill the very principles for advocating which these men were sent to gaol.

Mr. WYNDHAM replied that he had made his position on that point perfectly clear in his speech. He had no power to go behind the law.

Mr. CULLINAN: But if you have power to send men to gaol you can also remove this disqualification.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The power of dispensing the prerogative of mercy is a very different thing to that of instituting proceedings when we believe the law is being broken.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL : Will you give a Return of the number of persons disqualified, and the reasons for disqualification ?

No answer was returned.

Land Purchase at Rathcline.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the grounds upon which the Land Commission have refused to complete the transfer to John Farrell, of Carrowstraley, Barony of Rathcline, of his farm, the advance of the purchase money, £124, of which they had previously sanctioned; whether, seeing that the tenant had been actually paying the instalments, he will explain why Farrell was put back to the position of a tenant to whom the Court will not sanction a sale; and whether, having regard to the fact that only four tenancies now remain unsold on this estate, he will represent to the Commission the desirability of letting this sale go through immediately.

Mr. WYNDHAM : The Land Commission has not refused to complete the sale to this tenant. The application for the loan of £124 was provisionally sanctioned by the Commission in February, 1901, but the advance cannot be made until the Land Judge has declared him to be the purchaser. The Receiver has now been asked to report whether Farrell has paid his arrears of rent and interest on the purchase money to last gale day. If the reply is in the affirmative the sale of the holding will be completed without further delay.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL : There has been long delay. Will you press for a speedy termination of the case ?

Mr. WYNDHAM : I anticipate a speedy termination.

Irish Land Bill.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) : May I ask the Chief Secretary whether, following the precedent of the last Bill, he will lay on the Table a series of calculations showing how the proposed term under the Land Purchase Bill will work out as regards the purchasing tenants.

Mr. WYNDHAM : I shall be glad to give all the information I can.

LICENCE RENEWALS.

Sir W. HART DYKE (Kent, Dartford) : I beg to give notice for next Tuesday to introduce a Bill to restrict the refusal of justices to renew or transfer licences solely because they are not required in a locality, until some equitable scheme of compensation is enacted by the Legislature.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Lord EDMUND FITZMAURICE (Wiltshire, Cricklade) : Has the Prime Minister any statement to make as to the course of business ?

The PRIME MINISTER and FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E) : The Orders for Wednesday will include the Municipal Trading Motion, the Army (Annual) Bill, and other matters not disposed of on the Orders of to-day. On Thursday, if the Speaker can be got out of the Chair before midnight, the Civil Service Estimates will be proceeded with, but I propose to take uncontroversial Votes as far as possible. On Monday I hope to take the Scotch Licensing Bill and the Committee stage of the Army (Annual) Bill. On Tuesday, contrary to what I led the House to expect, I propose to have the London Education Bill, and to take the Third Reading of the Army (Annual) Bill. On Wednesday next week I shall propose a Motion for the holidays of such a character as, when carried, will prevent other business, either Government or private, being taken.

COLONEL WELBY: When will the Army (Annual) Bill be printed?

MR. BRODRICK: I hope in the course of to-day or to-morrow.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Mr. HALSEY reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had added to the Standing Committee on Law and Courts of Justice and Legal Procedure the following fifteen members in respect of the County Councils (Bills in Parliament) Bill: Mr. Brigg, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Caldwell, Mr. Jesse Collings, Mr. Shepherd Cross, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Joseph Howard, Mr. Grant Lawson, Mr. Llewellyn, Mr. Walter Long, Mr. Peel, Colonel Sackville, Sir Edward Strachey, Mr. Tomkinson, and Mr. John Wilson (Durham).

Mr. HALSEY further reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had added to the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures, the following fifteen members in respect of the Employment of Children Bill: Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas, Mr. Asquith, Sir George Bartley, Mr. Broadhurst, Sir Walter Foster, Sir John Gorst, Mr. Gray, Mr. T. M. Healy, Sir John Leng, Dr. Macnamara, Mr. Pirie, Sir Francis Powell, Mr. Crawford Smith, Mr. Parker Smith, and Mr. Spear.

MR. HALSEY further reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged the following Member from the Parliamentary Panel of Members of this House to act as Commissioners in pursuance of the provisions of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899: Mr. Abel Smith; and had appointed in substitution: Sir John Tuke.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILLS.

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO WILD ANIMALS BILL.

"To provide for the Prevention of Cruelty to Wild Animals," presented by Mr. Corrie Grant; supported by Dr. Shipman; to be read a second time upon Thursday, and to be printed. [Bill 129.]

FISHERIES (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

"To amend the law relating to Fisheries in Ireland, and for the better protection thereof," presented by Sir Henry Seton-Karr; supported by Sir William Tomlinson, Colonel Saunderson, Mr. Atherley-Jones, Colonel Nolan, and Mr. Yerburgh; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 26th May, and to be printed. [Bill 130.]

COAL MINES (CERTIFICATES) BILL.

"To amend the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887," presented by Mr. Samuel Evans; supported by Mr. Burt, Sir James Joicey, Sir William Tomlinson, Sir Alfred Thomas, and Mr. Abraham (Rhondda); to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 21st April, and to be printed. [Bill 131.]

INNKEEPERS' LIABILITY BILL.

Reported, with Amendments, from the Standing Committee on Trade, etc.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 99.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No 99.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration upon Friday, 12th June, and to be printed. [Bill 128.]

IRELAND DEVELOPMENT GRANT (CONSOLIDATED FUND).

Committee to consider of authorising the payment out of the Consolidated Fund of a Grant for the development of Ireland (King's Recommendation Signified), tomorrow.—(*Mr. Wyndham.*)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

[REPORTS OF MONEY COMMITTEES.]

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E): In moving the Resolution as to Ways and Means which stands in my name, I may say I do not think it requires much explanation. With one exception it is in the form in which it has been passed for many years without discussion or Amendment. The object is to enable Reports of the Committee of Ways and Means to be taken after twelve o'clock, and the only difference between this Motion and its predecessors is that it restricts its operation to Reports of the Committee of Ways and Means, and does not cover Reports of Supply as formerly. Owing to the recent reform of our Rules of Procedure, the House will not in future be asked to spend weary, and often, I fear, unprofitable hours after midnight in discussing Reports of Supply. But it would sometimes be extremely inconvenient if we could not take Reports of the Committee of Ways and Means, and I may cite as an illustration that last week, had any Member objected to its being taken, the whole business of Parliament would have been upset, and we should have had to interfere with a Private Members' day or take a Saturday sitting. Therefore it is with great confidence I ask the House to reaffirm the Sessional Order.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): I only rise to express my gratification that the right hon. Gentleman has been good enough to explain the change that has taken place in the form of this Sessional Order.

Ordered, that the Proceedings on the Reports of the Committee of Ways and Means and other Committees authorising the Expenditure of Public Money may be entered upon at any hour after midnight though opposed, and shall not be interrupted under the Standing Order (Sittings of the House).—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. KEARLEY (Devonport) said he rose with some regret to move practically the rejection of the Bill, with the main object of which he was in sympathy. The Measure professed to be a scheme to protect the honest producer and trader and the poor consumer; but that, he contended, was not a legitimate description. He considered that it was a Bill to legalise the sale of adulterated butter and to encourage the making of butter, by obsolete and inefficient methods. He proposed to verify that statement by a quotation from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill. The President of the Board of Agriculture, in introducing the Bill a few weeks ago, said he was at a loss to understand the grounds of opposition to the Measure. He made the extraordinary statement—

> "I really do not know where the opposition is to come from, except from those interested in the sale of an adulterated article."†

He did not know whether that cheer was supposed to signify that he (Mr. Kearley) was one of those, but he would remind the hon. Member who cheered, that ever since he had had the honour of a seat in the House, he had taken an active part in promoting legislation in the direction of purity of food. He took it, therefore, that the President of the Board of Agriculture excepted present company from his observations. He would endeavour to show that the opposition did not proceed from those who had an interest in the sale of adulterated articles, but that the President of the Board of Agriculture was really the friend of the adulterator. The necessity for having a standard of the percentage of water in butter, had forced itself on the attention of the Government, and he was glad that the Government had realised it. What was needed was a definite standard and not the kind of standard set up by the Bill. The standard should be binding upon all. Some Members might take exception to setting up a standard at all; they might maintain that it would be a greater evil to have a standard than to leave the law as at present, because with a standard it would be necessary to have a reasonable margin so that the honest makers of butter might not be subjected to prosecutions. The right hon. Gentleman had recognised that and had pointed out that the standard of 16 per cent. was a very lenient one, because the average was nearer 11 or 12 per cent. If, therefore, the Board of Agriculture had made the standard of 16 per cent. a definite one it would not be onerous upon butter producers. There was always connected with standards the tendency to level up to them, but he was of opinion that the setting up of a standard was more beneficial than leaving the matter in a haphazard condition. If the Bill stopped at the setting up of a standard of 16 per cent. he should support it heartily; but it did not stop there. The Bill gave all sorts of extraordinary exemptions. In the first place it legalised for the first time the sale of an adulterated article. It would be legal in the future to sell an article called adulterated butter. That was entirely contrary to the spirit of all food legislation in the past. In the next place he took exception to the exemption from the standard of what was known as Irish firkin butter. Further, any butter which contained more than 16 per cent. of water, if it could be proved that the excess moisture was due to the ordinary processes of manufacture, was to be exempt from any penalty. He maintained that those three exemptions would be detrimental to the interests of the country, of the producer, the trader, and assuredly of the consumer. In regard to the first of these exemptions he pointed out that the avowed intention of the President of the Board of Agriculture was to kill the sale of an article known as milk-blended butter But his contention was that by fixing a definite standard of 16 per cent. the right hon. Gentleman would arrive at his desire in a much more practical and assured manner. The only way to kill that nefarious trade was to prohibit the sale of that doctored article altogether. In point of fact the clause of the Bill which was intended to kill the sale of adulterated butter would not have that effect at all. It would be perfectly possible to continue the sale of that article, either by calling it something else—say "So-and-so's solid cream," or by boldly calling it adulterated butter, but adding "adulterated with pure, rich, English milk, churned daily, drawn from the celebrated herds of prize-winning Alderney cows."

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxviii, 1409.

Mr. HANBURY: No words but adulterated butter would be permitted on the label.

Mr. KEARLEY said he should be glad if the right hon. Gentleman would show him any clause in the Bill in which that was set out.

Mr. HANBURY: It is exactly the same as margarine. Nothing but margarine may appear on the label.

Mr. KEARLEY hoped the right hon. Gentleman was right. Nobody denied that there was a certain demand for this kind of article on account of the low price at which it was sold; but the effect of the legalisation of the sale of this adulterated article would be to stimulate competition in the supply of it, and genuine butter would be displaced in the market. If the sale of this article was to be legalised by Act of Parliament it would necessarily have a detrimental effect upon the production of pure butter, and so injure the interests of agriculture not only in this country but throughout the whole world.

What was the position of Irish butter to-day compared with twelve years ago? Its reputation stood higher than it had ever done before, and it was able to hold its own with the finest productions from the rest of the world. Twelve years ago the case was very different. The industry was in a parlous state, owing to the competition of other countries, particularly of Denmark; Irish butter had lost its reputation, and other butters had taken its place. The trade in Ireland had never been more prosperous or progressive than now. The creameries system was spreading throughout the land. But all the creameries and factories would be subject to the limitation of 16 per cent., and, so far from protesting, there was a disposition on their part to resent the exemption of any particular grade of Irish butter. According to a circular he had received, the out-turn of this particular butter was not large; it was described as a declining manufacture, and it was stated that the characteristics claimed for it were ceasing to find favour. The House was in this curious position—that exceptional treatment was claimed for the smallest section of Irish butter, because it was made by small hillside farmers, who, with their faulty methods and lack of practical knowledge, could not bring themselves into line with the standard being set up for the rest of the world. But Ireland was not the only country in which there were small hillside farmers. The small farmers of North Wales were probably in the same position as those of Ireland, but in their case no exemption was proposed. The value of the butter imported into this country amounted to £20,000,000 per year; the total production in Ireland was £8,000,000. The £20,000,000 worth of butter came from almost every country in Europe, from Asia, Western Siberia, North and South America, and every part of Australasia, and the whole of it would be subject to the 16 per cent. limitation. He contended that the proposed exemption would be injurious to Ireland itself. Ireland, the oldest butter-producing country in the world, would have her reputation disparaged by this treatment, because every dishonest vendor of butter in the British Isles who desired to sell the adulterated article would declare it to be Irish firkin butter. It would be the easiest thing in the world to connive with some one in Ireland to send over an invoice every week of a single firkin of Irish butter, which could be produced when the inspector of the local authority sampled the butter and found the percentage exceeded. In every police court the fair fame of Irish butter would be dragged in the mire, and he appealed to those Irish Members who had the reputation of Irish butter at heart not to lend themselves to this exceptional treatment.

What were the views of those who had the management of the largest butter market in Ireland? The Trustees of the Cork Butter Market, in their circular, pointed out that in 1880 there passed through that market 380,000 firkins of firkin butter, which quantity had fallen in 1902 to 52,000 firkins, and they estimated the total value of the firkin butter as being not higher than £960,000 per year out of a total Irish production of £8,000,000. Of the firkin butter which passed through Cork market in 1902, coming from Limerick, Clare, Waterford, Tipperary, and Kerry, as well as from Cork, 93 per cent. showed less than 16 per cent. of moisture, and would, therefore, require no exemption, while of the remaining 7 per cent. the greater portion contained between 16 and 18 per cent. of moisture. The value of the butter with more than 16 per cent. of moisture was only £96,000 per year. Was it reasonable to ask the House to grant this exemption for so small a quantity? He did not agree with those Members who urged that unless this 20 per cent. was allowed the industry would be ruined. He believed the makers would accommodate themselves to the new condition of affairs. If the suggestion of a time limit would meet the views of those who held the contrary view, he would cordially support it. He was opposed to the Bill, in the first place, because it legalised for the first time the sale of an adulterated article, contrary to the spirit of the Adulteration Acts; secondly, because in so doing it would depreciate the value of the pure article, and be hurtful to the interests of the producer, distributor and consumer; and, thirdly, because it was only by setting up a definite standard, with no exemptions whatever, that this manipulation would be made impossible, because it would not be profitable to continue it. He hoped Irish Members who supported the exemption would believe that he was not actuated by any feeling of hostility to their country in the course he was taking. He knew their country very well and he asked them to consider whether the advantages they would gain by this exemption would not be altogether overwhelmed by the disadvantages which must inevitably accrue to Ireland.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.) said that this Bill had been brought before the notice of the House by the wrong Minister. The President of the Board of Agriculture was asking them to pass a new and most drastic law affecting one of the largest articles of commerce in this country, and in doing this he thought the right hon. Gentleman was out of place. Such a measure should be brought forward by the President of the Board of Trade, who would be able to look at the question from a broader standpoint. His hon. friend the Member for Devonport had pointed out the vast amount of commerce that would be affected by this Bill. He had told them that the imports of butter from abroad amounted to £20,000,000, and from Ireland the total amount was about £8,000,000 sterling. If they added to this the huge production of butter in this country, they would be driven to the conclusion that this was one of the largest articles of commerce handled by business men in this kingdom. The first objection he would urge against this measure was that it was not a simple Bill. It was one of the most pernicious examples of legislation by reference that they had ever had before the House. No one who read this Bill would be able to make head or tail of it unless he read the whole code of laws passed from the year 1875 down to the present year. Finally, after reading these Acts he would not get at the bottom of the position. A standard had been spoken of, fixed at 16 per cent. of water, but this was not clear on the face of the Bill. They would not find that 16 per cent. was fixed in the Bill of 1889. In that measure there was a clause empowering the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Agriculture to fix the standard. In the ever fluctuating Government which he hoped they would have in the future the next Minister might fix a different standard, and there would be no knowledge as to what the standard really was, because it might be constantly changed. For that reason they ought to throw out this Bill, and demand a more simple measure. They should demand that this Bill should be simplified, and a much plainer proposal made to the House.

The Bill was a great deal too severe; when they looked through this measure and referred to the other Acts of Parliament they would find it was a most drastic Bill. It proceeded to say that if any breach occurred of the rule laid down in the first clause of the Bill the penalties embodied as amended should apply. Was the House aware that the Amendment thus included was three months imprisonment with hard labour for a breach of the rule laid down in the first clause of the Bill. The House ought to consider whether in regard to a great article of commerce like butter it was right to expose all classes in this country who might happen to touch this trade to this draconic punishment of three months hard labour. All the provision merchants, and grocers, and people engaged in the distribution of food of every kind in this country would be affected. It would be very hard for any honest trader to be dealt with in this way, and they ought to consider how it would affect the customs of the country to impose such a severe penalty for an offence which it might be very easy to make. The crime imposed by this Bill was a perfectly new one. Great improvements had taken place in the manufacture of butter, and one of the main improvements was that they had reduced the quantity of water. If through any inadequate manufacture, for which no one could be at all to blame, the quantity of water got above 16 per cent. then people were liable to be haled off to prison for three months hard labour. This was a very serious thing to do. He suggested that too much severity in these matters defeated its own object. It might be said that if a man sold something which was not as represented he was a scoundrel and ought to be punished. In a matter of this kind, however, he thought it was much better to have a moderate penalty, and he ventured to suggest that this penalty was too severe, and would tend to defeat the object of the Bill.

The introduction of Ireland into this Bill in regard to the butter industry was really one of the most pitiful cases that could be brought before the House. They got more butter from Ireland than from any other country, and if Ireland only had a decent Government he was sure they would get twice as much butter from Ireland. Nobody could tell exactly how much butter they got from Ireland, and that fundamental fact was one of the features of the Irish situation. His hon. friend read out the story of the destruction of the great Cork Market. That brought a great deal of misery to those who supplied the market, and led to an extraordinary and lamentable emigration. They could not speak of the Irish butter industry without a feeling of remorse that this House treated Ireland as it did. Denmark was a great rival to Ireland in the butter trade, but the Danish Government took steps to have its butter placed properly on the market. They knew exactly the amount of butter that came from Denmark and Australia, and other places, but they did not know what amount came from Ireland. What they did know was that it cost as much to bring a tub of butter from Ireland as from Denmark. He thought the House ought to hesitate before giving another blow to Ireland by passing a Bill of this kind. No doubt the President of the Board of Agriculture meant to be kind and considerate to Ireland when he put in this provision that a little more water should be allowed in Irish butter than that of any other country. His own belief was that Ireland suffered as much from legislation conceived in a spirit of kindness, but without knowledge, as it did from coercion imposed by this House. If this Bill passed at all they should go a little farther than his hon. friend had suggested in order to protect Ireland. He agreed with his hon. friend's principle. But when his hon. friend came to suggest what he would do in view of the exceptional position of Ireland, he simply said that he would give a time limit of a few months before the strict standard set up by the Bill would apply. He himself thought that should be enlarged. If they were to proceed at all let them take a somewhat lower standard. Let them take a standard of, say, 18 per cent. instead of 16 and 20, and let that be set up equally for Ireland and for every other part of the country. He did not mean to say that that would be the quantity of water to sanction in the first qualities of butter, but when they were drawing the line they ought to give as much width to manufacturers and sellers as possible. He suggested to the right hon. Gentleman that he should withdraw the present Bill because it was too severe, and that he should bring in a simple Bill making the standard 18 per cent. If they were to draw a line they should draw it somewhat broadly and leave an ample margin, and even then he would suggest that the penalties should be less than they were.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Mr. Kearley.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.) said this Bill had his cordial support, because he believed that if it passed into law as it now stood it would be very much in the interest of pure butter. Clause I. of the Bill was as follows—

"It shall be unlawful to manufacture, sell, expose for sale or import any butter mixture containing more than 20 per cent. of water, and every person who manufactures, sells, exposes for sale, or imports any butter or butter mixture which contains more than that percentage shall be liable on summary conviction to the penalties imposed by Section 4 of the Margarine Act, 1887, as amended by Section 17, Sub-section 2, of the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 1899."

He had taken the trouble to read the sections of the Acts mentioned, and he found that for the first offence it was a fine not exceeding £20; for the second offence a fine not exceeding £50; and for the third offence a fine not exceeding £100, or, if the Court were of opinion that a fine would not meet the circumstances of the case, the offenders might be committed to prison with or without hard labour for a period not exceeding three months. He thought that would make for pure butter. Clause III. of the Bill provided that it would be held that any water in butter in excess of the prescribed limit was due to the addition of some substance unless it was proved to be due in the ordinary process of butter making. From these clauses it would be seen that butter could not lawfully contain more than 20 per cent. of water, and if it contained more than 16 per cent., which was fixed as the standard, the presumption would be that the butter was not pure until the contrary was proved. He considered that these clauses were very much in the public interest. They threw the onus on the defendant in the case of a prosecution, when the percentage was over 16 per cent., of proving that the butter was pure, and in that way they made it exceedingly difficult for any person to practice fraud in connection with this industry.

Referring to the manner in which the question of Irish firkin butter was being treated in this Bill he said he must disagree with the remarks made by the hon. Member for Devonport regarding it. This butter was made in certain districts in the south of Ireland. It was sound-keeping butter. It was made to keep for six or eight months. Being brine-cured butter it necessarily contained a larger percentage of water than butter that was made for immediate consumption. That was an important point, and therefore he contended that it would be most unfair to fix the same standard for that class of butter as for butter which was made in a creamery for immediate consumption. The brine-cured butter had a large market in the manufacturing towns in the north of England. Its output, according to the evidence given before the Departmental Committee on Butter Regulations, being between £2,000,000 and £3,000,000 sterling annually. He held a letter in his hand from a commission agent in Manchester, who gave as one reason why this butter was popular in Lancashire and Yorkshire the fact that it could be taken by workers to the cotton mills because it stood the temperature better than creamery butter. That, of course, was very likely to make Irish salt butter a popular food with the working classes in these counties. Did hon. Gentlemen who disagreed with the 20 per cent. standard for this class of butter contend that it could be made with the same percentage of water as creamery butter? If they did he had expert evidence against their opinion. But if they admitted that it could not be made with the same percentage of water as creamery butter, then why fix the same standard for it? Professor Tichborne gave evidence before the Departmental Committee as an expert in this matter. He said he was in favour of a dual standard of water in butter. He suggested a limit of 16 per cent. for creamery and 20 per cent. for salt butter. He stated that if a limit of 16 per cent. were fixed for the article, the trade in Ireland in it would be extinguished in five years, because two-thirds of the producers could not make it at that limit, and everybody who sold the butter would be subject to prosecution. Professor Tichborne did not think any administrative difficulty would arise from the fact that there was a dual standard. In his evidence the hon. Secretary of the South of Ireland Butter Merchants Association stated that since 1895 there had practically been a 20 per cent. standard prevailing in Munster for salt firkin butter, and that the magistrates would not convict on anything under that percentage. Salt firkin butter made with brine could be kept for six months. The chief advantage of brining was that the butter would keep sweet and good for six months without becoming mottled or streaky, as butter made with dry salt sometimes did. He had received resolutions bearing out what he said which were passed by a number of public bodies in the South of Ireland, where the butter was made. The public bodies included Limerick Board of Guardians, Limerick County Council, Corporation of Limerick, Newcastle West District Council, and Newcastle West Town Commissioners. A resolution was passed in North Kerry to the same effect as the others. The South of Ireland Butter Merchants Association had also passed a resolution with similar purport.

Now he came to what he considered an important resolution, in view of the fact that a deputation from Cork waited on the President of the Board of Agriculture recently and stated, on behalf of the farmers of Munster, that firkin butter could be made with 16 per cent. of water, and that outside Cork only about 4,000 firkins of this butter were sold. The Cork butter merchants last year passed a resolution. The resolution set forth that having intimate trade connections and otherwise with large numbers of producers of butter under the firkin system, they were unanimously of opinion that the water in cured or salt butter should not be less than 18 per cent., and that any less would operate injuriously to the producers of and dealers in these butters, and would be detrimental to the general interests. From experience they were satisfied that dairy farmers could not in most cases after exercising the greatest diligence and care produce salt firkin butter with less than 18 per cent. of water. They considered that the industry would be greatly imperilled if a hard and fast standard of 16 per. cent. were adopted. He had been informed that the deputation which waited on the Minister of Agriculture stated that outside of Cork only 4,000 firkins of this butter were sold. To that statement, if made, he was in a position to give the most positive contradiction. Mr. Gibson, Public Creamery Market, Limerick, one of the best authorities on the butter trade, in a recent letter to the *Limerick Leader* said that the total number of firkins sold in six of the firkin markets outside Cork during 1902 was 33,164; and he had only that morning received a letter from Mr. Gibson which stated that in seventeen butter markets outside Cork 93,539 packages of firkin butter were sold last year. The Listowel Urban Council in North Kerry also passed a resolution in condemnation of the action of the Cork Butter Market Trustees, and stating that there was the best practical proof that salt butter could not be manufactured under the standard fixed by Mr. Hanbury—20 per cent. They branded the statement that only 4,000 firkins of salt butter were sold outside Cork as misleading. The amount in their district alone last year was 13,000 firkins. The Tipperary Board of Guardians passed a resolution since the First Reading of the Bill thanking the Irish Parliamentary Party for supporting Mr. Hanbury in fixing 20 per cent. as the standard amount of water in Irish firkin butter, and he had similar resolutions from many other public bodies. The only public body in Ireland which passed a resolution against the 20 per cent. standard was the Cork County Council. They said that the Irish salt butter was placed in the same category as margarine. That statement was ridiculous. Under the Bill there was nothing of the kind done. The Cork County Council also said that the Bill, if passed into law, would have a disastrous effect on the Irish butter trade. He disagreed with that statement. He considered that if the standard were fixed below 20 per cent. there would be numerous prosecutions, which would do far more to injure the butter trade than a 20 per cent. standard.

He now came to the Report of the Departmental Committee on Butter Regulations, which was appointed in 1901. That Report, which was signed by the hon. Member for Devonport, who now objected to a higher percentage of water than 16, set forth that the real difficulty which the Committee felt in arriving at a decision arose from the existence in the market of a particular article which would be injuriously affected by a low standard. The evidence went to show that the manufacture of the salt firkin butter had materially decreased, and was now confined to the south-west of Ireland, though there was still a definite demand for it in Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Wales, on account of its low price, distinctive flavour, and long keeping qualities. It was a peculiarity of this butter, owing to the particular method of its manufacture, carried on for many generations, that it contained a higher percentage of moisture than any other butter coming into the market. This difficulty, the report continued, would be met by fixing two distinct limits—16 per cent. for ordinary butter, and another limit for Irish firkin butter 20 per cent. The purchaser would be legally protected, provided sufficient disclosure as to the amount of moisture over 16 per cent. in the butter were made by the vendor. He wondered how the hon. Member for Devonport after signing that Report could object to a standard of 20 per cent. for Irish firkin butter. All the evidence adduced, and all the resolutions passed by public bodies, proved that this class of butter required special treatment; and if it were stated by the producers that it contained more than 16 per cent. of water, and we know it could not lawfully contain more than 20 per cent., it would comply with the provisions of the Bill. There could be no deception, neither could there be fraud, because the vendors to protect themselves would get a warrant in writing from the makers as to its genuineness. He supported the Bill also because it would go a long way—he hoped the full way—to stop the practice, which amounted to a fraud on the public, of blending milk with butter by means of a mechanical process in order to increase its weight and bulk. Anything which stopped the sale of milk-blended butter had his support. Under this Bill, if it was sold at all, it would be labelled "adulterated butter," and it should be stated that it contained more than 16 per cent. of moisture. Under these conditions he considered the article would not have a large sale, which would be no loss to the public. For all these reasons he supported the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman deserved the thanks of the public for bringing in this Bill, which was clearly in their interest. The Bill aimed at, and he had no doubt it would succeed, in putting a stop to fraudulent practices in the trade which had existed for a long time. He heartily supported it; and trusted the right hon. Gentleman would stand by the clause exempting Irish salt firkin butter.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said he presided over the Select Committee on the Sale of Food and Drugs which dealt with this question, and made recommendations with regard to it. It was largely an Irish question, and he would consider it from that standpoint. He agreed with one observation of the hon. Member for West Islington, namely that the Bill was not a model of precision. It was a specimen of legislation by reference, and no one taking up the Bill could find out very well what its intention was. The history of the matter was as follows. The Committee which sat on the Sale of Food and Drugs recommended the setting up of a standard for milk and butter. A Departmental Committee sat afterwards to recommend a standard; and did recommend a standard of 16 per cent. of water in butter. That was to say that butter containing only 16 per cent. of water should be regarded as pure butter. The hon. Gentleman said he would prefer a general standard of 18 per cent. He objected to that, because the danger of all standardising was that the dishonest manufacturer worked up to the standard. The proposal of the hon. Gentleman amounted to this, that while it was admitted that ordinary butters could be made perfectly well with a percentage of water even less than 16 per cent., he would offer the dishonest manufacturer an inducement to work up to 18 per cent.

MR. LOUGH said that that would not necessarily be dishonest.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said that was a matter of casuistry.

MR. LOUGH said that the whole argument in support of this particular sort of butter showed that a higher standard should be admitted.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said that if the hon. Gentleman had proposed a dual standard he could have understood it; but to have a general standard of 18 per cent., where 16 per cent. was admitted to be enough for ordinary purposes, would give the dishonest manufacturer an inducement to work to the higher standard. The Select Committee recommended a standard, the Departmental Committee recommended it, and for good or evil it had been adopted. The hon. Member for Devonport complained of the exemption of Irish salt butter; but the hon. Member was a member of the Select Committee on the Sale of Food and Drugs. He heard all the evidence in favour of the exemption of Irish salt butter; and yet the Committee unanimously recommended as follows:

> "The weight of evidence is clearly to the effect that any standard for water under 20 per cent. would be unfair to the producers of the butter referred to."

That recommendation was passed unanimously, and that was the basis on which the Bill was founded. The Departmental Committee came to the same conclusion, and adopted a standard of 16 per cent. for ordinary butter; recommending, however, the exemption of Irish salt butter. Surely it was therefore now too late for the Cork butter merchants to make a protest. It was true that the trade in this butter had diminished. Why? Because of the extraordinary increase in the creamery system in Ireland. That was to be expected; but the fact remained that Irish salt butter was a great article of commerce in the North of England, and had special qualities. It was proved in evidence that it was largely used in bakeries, where no other butter could stand the temperature. Why, for mere uniformity, should they run the risk of crushing out this trade? The Cork butter merchants were heard before the Select Committee, and their evidence did not substantially differ from the evidence of experts. The Bill was not a model of lucidity, but read in connection with the Act of 1889, it was perfectly plain. It meant that all butter with more than 16 per cent. of water was to be regarded as adulterated, with the exemption of this small class of butter; and that exemption he would support.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.) said he would support the Bill, especially the clause with reference to Irish salt butter. He lived in a district which was practically the centre of Ireland; even now there was a considerable trade in salt firkin butter there, and he should be sorry to see any legislation passed which would cripple that industry. There could be no greater misfortune than to leave the farmers absolutely in the hands of the creamery owners. He was not by any means inimical to the creamery system; but it was by no means an unmixed blessing, and it contained many evils which, he was afraid, would in the future very seriously affect the industrial development of Ireland. Near Longford was the headquarters of a large butter factory which collected the cream of four or five counties, and exported large quantities of butter to England. But although that factory existed in the County of Longford, it did not make an appreciable inroad on the salt firkin butter industry; and salt butter to the value of £16,000 to £20,000 was still sold in the open market in the town of Longford. He thought, therefore, that to deprive the farmers of what he might call free trade in butter by reducing the percentage of water to 16 per cent., would be a very serious thing indeed; and would leave the farmers absolutely at the mercy of the creamery system. He looked with suspicion on the creameries, because they were merely gigantic frauds worked for personal gain, and not in the interests of either the farmer or the butter industry. He regarded the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman with very great favour. He believed it would keep an open market for butter in Ireland and give the farmers a chance of competing with the creameries. For that reason, he cordially supported the Bill.

*SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston) said he took a very great interest in this matter having, as Chairman of the Select Committee which inquired into it, heard a good deal of evidence upon the subject. He thought if the right hon. Gentleman desired to improve the quality of butter in these islands, and keep bad butter out of the market, the proper course to adopt was to make a standard and stick to it, because by so doing he would benefit the public by insuring that they had a proper and wholesome article of food. Therefore he had not much affection for the first Clause of the Bill, which allowed the limit to be extended to 20 per cent., and did not stick to the original 16 per cent. limit. Any expansion of the 16 per cent. limit was a direct injury to the consumer. He had great sympathy with the Irish salt firkin butter industry. He knew that butter, which was a wholesome article of diet, and he should be very sorry indeed to see it squeezed out of the market, but he thought the difficulty would be met by having a time limit for the introduction of the strict regulations with regard to Irish firkin butter. If, say, two or three years were given as a time limit, Irish firkin butter could be gradually brought up to the required standard, so that it would not come at once under the strict standard of the law. And if by those means Irish firkin butter could be improved it would be a benefit to the country; if it could not be improved the industry would gradually die away without causing any great hardships on those engaged in it. He wished to see Irish manufactures lifted up to the highest standard.

One of the greatest difficulties in both this country and Ireland was that the slow and sluggish individual action of the farmers had been beaten by the co-operative enterprise of the farmers of other nations; that co-operative enterprise should be introduced more and more into this country, in order that the farmers should be stimulated up to a higher standard. He was still less in favour of the second Clause of the Bill, because it introduced a new principle altogether. In all their efforts at legislation in these matters their first object had been to prevent deleterious adjuncts being added to articles consumed by the people. They wanted to take care that any artificial provision of food should be in the direction of not injuring the health of the consumers. The right hon. Gentleman's object in the second clause was to do away with milk-blended butter. Although he (Sir Walter Foster) had no sympathy with the man who wished to sell it as pure butter he had no sympathy with those who would stop the people buying a cheap article of food when they could not afford the dearer one, so long as the article was a wholesome one and contained only the constituents of milk and cream. Milk-blended butter was a wholesome and pleasant article to take and was better, in his opinion, than margarine, which in itself was by no means unpleasant. That being so he did not see why there should be any special clause put into any Bill for the purpose of stamping out this article of commerce. If it contained a larger quantity of moisture than butter should contain it could easily be dealt with under the section of the law which dealt with the matter. If it contained no more water than butter should contain then it was a benefit to the public because it came at a cheaper price. If these were not useful and wholesome articles of food sooner or later they would go to the wall in favour of better articles. He did not want anything which the right hon. Gentleman might do to prevent adulteration of butter to interfere with a proper and wholesome article of food being supplied to the people. While he generally approved of the policy of the right hon. Gentleman in endeavouring to make butter as pure as possible he did not think he should interfere with articles of food which were not unwholesome in themselves. The second clause had raised a good deal of opposition in the country, and if it could be either dropped or modified in such a way as to allow milk-blended butter to come within the Act, and if the right hon. Gentleman could also do something in the way of a time limit or give a dual standard, so as not to interfere with one of the national industries of Ireland, he would receive his support to the Bill.

MR. HENRY HOBHOUSE (Somersetshire, E.) said the right hon. Gentleman opposite had condemned every proposal in the Bill while apparently giving some approval to it. He hoped on this side of the House, at any rate, some encouragement would be given to the honest producer and that the consumer would be protected against fraud. That was the object of this Bill. No consumer required a large proportion of water in his butter when he bought it; he was quite content with the 16 per cent. There seemed to be some misapprehension in the minds of dairy farmers with regard to the proposed 20 per cent., but in his opinion they were misled by the involved character of the Bill. The important part of the Bill was contained in the second clause. The standard limit was 16 per cent. though good butter could be made with only 11 per cent., but in making a standard it was necessary to leave a considerable margin; when in the forefront of the Bill however they met with a clause which forbade the sale of butter containing more than 20 per cent. of water, everybody jumped to the conclusion a new standard had been made for English butter. Irish butter was quite a different article, and the proper way to deal with the matter would have been to put down two standards for the two different articles. He admitted that the first clause laid down the standard not for butter, but for adulterated butter. Everything containing more than 16 per cent. of moisture was to be called adulterated butter, and it was not to be sold if it contained more than 20 per cent. That, however, was not generally understood, and it was doubtful whether, having drawn the line between butter and adulterated butter, the Government should not go further and forbid altogether the sale of butter coming within the term "adulterated."

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.) said there was a general consensus of opinion in favour of the principle of the Bill, and most of the points which had been raised could be more adequately dealt with in Committee. He believed the standard of 16 per cent. of moisture was not too strict, and although he had urged that view on a former occasion he had had no protests from his constituents. The proposed exemption would brand with the mark of inferiority the great bulk of Irish butter. But he did not intend to vote against the Second Reading, because he believed protection was necessary for the honest trader and buttermaker. It was not possible for the Cork Butter Market Trustees to place their figures before the Committee of last year, because it was not until the beginning of the year that they began to take careful analyses of every package of butter. Most of the speeches in favour of the higher limit ought to have been made a quarter of a century ago. If in County Cork it was possible to keep within the 16 per cent., why could it not be done in Limerick? It certainly could be done if an effort were made, and to enable it to be done a time limit might be given.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. HANBURY, Preston): I agree with the hon. Member opposite that most of the points which have been raised could be better dealt with in Committee than on the Second Reading of the Bill. The speeches of the mover and seconder of the Amendment were most contradictory, but I confess that of the two I agree a great deal more with the hon. Member for Devonport, because, for the life of me, I could not gather whether the hon. Member for West Islington was in favour of, or opposed to adulteration. I rather thought he had a sneaking feeling in its favour, but the hon. Member for Devonport opposed the Bill, not because it is too drastic, but because it is not drastic enough. If the Bill is to be opposed on any ground, that certainly is the ground which would be most acceptable to me. I am as strongly in favour of doing everything that can be done to put a stop to adulteration, consistently with public opinion, as the hon. Member for Devonport himself, and my only fear with regard to this Bill has been that of going ahead of public opinion. If I have made a mistake in the matter, it is probably, as the hon. Member for Devonport thinks, because the measure is not stringent enough.

The criticisms made by the hon. Member for Devonport really embody all the objections raised to the Bill. He said he would support a hard and fast 16 per cent. from which no departures whatever were allowed, and pointed out that the cause of butter containing a greater percentage than 16 per cent. of moisture was frequently careless making. In so doing he attacked the idea of having any presumptive standard, and declared that the standard must be fixed, and that all butter containing moisture above the standard, whatever might be the cause of the excess, ought to be condemned. That is not the view that Parliament has taken. Parliament has not enabled me to fix anything but a presumptive standard. The only authority given to me is to fix a standard implying that butter or milk is not genuine if it contains water above the standard fixed. That is true of all the articles in regard to which I am allowed by Act of Parliament to fix a standard, and I think it would be very hard for the honest man, especially for a poor or ignorant man, who, through poverty or ignorance — with every intention of making a genuine article—makes a butter slightly above the standard, to be condemned without being given an opportunity of proving that the article is genuinely made. That brings me to the second objection which the hon. Member raises to the Bill. He complains that butter or butter mixture which contains more than 16 per cent. of water, and which, moreover, contains added water deliberately worked into it, up to 20 per cent., should be allowed to be sold, and says that this is a new departure. It is not, however, a new departure, because margarine is very much on the same footing. Hon. Members are aware of the kind of butter which was the main cause of this Bill being brought in, but I shall be perfectly willing to consider in Committee whether the suggestion of the hon. Member on this point can be met. The facts of the case are these: Colonial butter containing only 9 or 10 per cent. of water is bought by manufacturers of this milk-blended butter because that kind of butter is so dry that it lends itself to the addition of a large amount of water, and a large amount is added, sometimes up to as much as 25 per cent. This article is sold to the public not as adulterated butter, which it really is, but, on the contrary, as butter blended with milk, and it is represented as being very much better than the proper butter. That is a thing which this Bill will put a stop to. The hon. Member opposite is quite mistaken in saying that it will be possible for this particular firm, or those who make this milk-blended butter in the future, to describe it in the same terms which they have hitherto used with regard to it. That will be quite impossible. The Bill follows the analogy of the Margarine Act.

The hon. Member for Ilkeston argued that adding a large volume of water to butter did not constitute adulteration. I thought that was one of the strangest arguments from a gentleman in the position of the hon. Member that I ever heard, and he put it forward in the interests of the consumer. If there is one consumer who ought to be protected it is the poorest class of people who buy this butter, and the doctrine of *caveat emptor* is a very dangerous doctrine indeed. Even if the poor consumer is told what the percentage of water is he does not understand it, and therefore it is absolutely necessary if the consumer is to be protected against an adulterated article that it should be called by its true name, and that name is, adulterated butter. I agree with a good deal of what was said by the hon. Member for Devonport on this matter, and I shall be perfectly prepared to .consider in Committee amendments which will get rid of what seems to him to be a somewhat cumbrous matter in the Bill, namely, this distinction between 16 and 20 per cent.; it is not a new standard, but simply a provision that butter may be adulterated up to 20 per cent. Possibly as the Bill stands, the compulsory term of adulterated butter might kill the trade. I am not so sure that that would be the case, but it will be well to consider in Committee whether, in the interests of the honest producer and the poorest consumer, it is not better to kill a trade of this kind by not allowing any adulteration of butter at all.

Then comes the question of the Irish salt firkin butter. This is a matter more for the Committee than for the present stage, but I think it ought to be remembered that this is by no means so small a trade as has been represented. I think the Committee of the Cork butter market have understated the amount of salt butter of this kind which is sold outside the Cork butter market. If it be true that only 7 per cent. of this butter coming to that market contains over 16 per cent. of water. I was very much struck by finding what a large trade there was outside the Cork butter market. It is not only a large trade, but it is one in which many of the poor farmers in the south of Ireland are interested. It is a trade not only of importance in Ireland but of considerable importance in our own manufacturing districts of Lancashire and Yorkshire; and it would be a very wrong thing to kill by one blow a large and old-established trade like this. At the same time I should like those hon. Members from Ireland who are interested in this trade, and who are interested, as I am sure they are, in raising the standard of butter making generally in Ireland, to consider whether, as this is a diminishing trade, it would not be reasonable to put a stop to it by fixing some kind of a time limit. I am open to suggestions on that point. Meanwhile I shall have a good deal more definite information placed before me.

The authorities of the Cork Butter Market promised to send me suggestions in support of the evidence they put before me through their deputation, but I have not yet had that information. When I receive it I shall be glad to see whether it is possible to verify some of the statements made before me, which, I must confess, very much astonish me. I am glad that, on the whole, the principle of the Bill is accepted, but I shall keep an open mind with a view to strengthening it in Committee in the direction indicated by the hon. Member for Devonport. These are, however, matters more for the Committee stage than for the Second Reading. I am glad that the House is in favour generally of the principle of the Bill, and I hope that any further criticism will be reserved for the Committee stage.

*SIR EDWARD STRACHEY (Somersetshire, S.) congratulated the right hon. Gentleman upon an improved Bill. He was one of those who desired to see this measure strengthened, and he acknowledged that 20 per cent. of water might be high in some cases. He suggested that it would be better not to have a sliding scale between 16 per cent. and 20 per cent. The question was whether any injustice would be done if there was no sliding scale. As far as he was aware, even under the present regulations, *i.e.*, 16 per cent. limit, there had been no prosecutions of farmers for selling butter under the standard. The present regulations had been enforced for something like one year, and if there had been any grievances in regard to them the right hon. Gentleman would have heard of them. The fact that they had had no complaints in regard to the present standard appeared to show that it was a safe limit. This view was borne out by some very interesting experiments made at the Dairy Show at Islington in 1901. There were fifty-three lots of butter analysed out of the butter sent to compete for prizes at the show, and they showed an average of 13·28 per cent. of water. There were ten lots of butter tests also analysed, and they showed a percentage of 14·52, and there were eleven lots from the working dairy which showed an average percentage of 12·11. This showed that out of seventy-three lots of butter the average percentage of water was a very low one indeed. On the other hand it was quite true that there was in the case of one of the exhibits of butter an instance where the percentage of water rose to 18·65 per cent., but there was also an exhibit taken where the lowest percentage of water was 9·95. In regard to butter test lots, the lowest was 12·85 and the highest 16·90. In the working dairy the lowest percentage was 11·5 and the highest 13·45. These figures showed that butter, with one exception, came well within the limit. As to butter made by small farmers, and it was desirable that the House should consider whether the standard was not a little too high. He thought if they wanted something higher than 16 per cent. 18 was high enough. The hon. Member for the Ilkeston Division had said he thought this might be an interference with the food of the people. He agreed with the President of the Board of Agriculture that it was nothing of the kind. It was an interference with allowing the food of the people to be adulterated and "faked." The hon. Member might as well say that interference with the putting of water in milk was an interference with the food of the people. If his hon. friend carried that argument forward it would be very dangerous indeed, as it would lead to working men's food being adulterated. It seemed to him most essential that working men should be protected in connection with this question as well as producers and retailers.

* MR. BOND (Nottingham, E.) said he intervened in the debate because he had received a petition, with reference to the Bill, signed by a number of the inhabitants of Nottingham. Judging from the signatures and addresses of the petitioners, they were people of the poorer class. What they said was that they had learned that the avowed object of the

Bill was to prevent the sale of milk-blended butter by giving it the obnoxious and offensive title of adulterated butter. They asserted that they had for a long time bought milk-blended butter, knowing what they were buying, and preferred it as a cheaper article. That petition showed that these people were in the habit of buying milk-blended butter, that they knew it was not the ordinary butter of commerce, and that for reasons of their own—among them that it was suited to their palates and cheaper—they preferred to buy the milk-blended to the ordinary butter. Then why in the world should not the present practice continue? Why should these people be deprived of the article they wanted? As he understood the matter, the Adulteration Acts were intended to prevent consumers of food from being poisoned or cheated. They could not say that this milk-blended butter would poison people; and the question of fraud had been dealt with in the Court of Appeal, and it had been decided that there was no fraud at all in the matter of milk-blended butter, for it had been found to be in accordance with its description, and that the consumers were not taken in. Under the circumstances he thought there was a great deal in the remarks of the hon. Member for the Ilkeston Division. He thought they ought to pause long before sanctioning the Second Reading of a Bill which, if it were once allowed to pass, would cause milk-blended butter to lose its *raison d'être.* The Bill proposed a wholly unnecessary departure. If the hon. Member for Devonport went to a division he should vote with him, though not for the reasons which he gave.

MR. CULLINAN (Tipperary, S.) said he met the hon. Member for Devonport in his own county in Ireland some years ago, and from the interest he took in the butter trade then, he was sure that he was acting with the best intentions in the course he was taking with regard to this matter. But, after all, those who were immediately concerned were those whose appeals should receive greatest consideration. In a portion of his constituency there was perhaps the finest butter-producing land in the world. It was generally known as the Golden Bay. In that district they certainly had a good many creameries in which mild-cured butter was manufactured, but, at the same time, there were a great many farmers who were still manufacturing salt butter, and who preferred the old system to the new system in operation in the creamery. He knew a number of farmers who for a while sent milk to the creameries, and who now treated it in the ordinary manner because they found it was more remunerative to do so. Most extraordinary efforts used to be made by the co-operative creameries to force all into their factories, and to leave the farmers no option. He held that it would be highly injurious to the dairy farmers of Ireland if they were to limit the production of butter to these co-operative societies. The fact of the farmers being able to manufacture their own butter was a guarantee that the trade would not be seriously injured. Irish salt butter was a speciality, and there was no other butter in the world could compete with it. They had every reason to be thankful to the President of the Board of Agriculture for having taken up this question. He was rather disappointed to hear the right hon. Gentleman say that he would consider some Amendments on the Bill in view of what had been said by the hon. Member for Devonport. The right hon. Gentleman said he would consider the suggestion as to putting on a limit. That was a very serious matter. He had admitted that the Cork deputation had put forward some information which was not correct. If the right hon. Gentleman was going to receive information from the Cork deputation, the hon. Member hoped he would give those who supported the Bill an opportunity of supplying information later on.

MR. McGOVERN (Cavan, W.) said that if a stranger had entered the House and listened to the debate he might have imagined that there was no butter made except in Cork and Limerick. He came from a district where much interest was taken in this question, and where as good butter was made as in Cork or Limerick. In those two counties, which were occupied by small dairy farmers, a large quantity of butter was made under the old system, although there were also a large number of creameries. He agreed with the hon. Member for Devonport in what he said in regard to adulterated butter, but he disagreed with him in the statement that the Irish farmers purposely adulterated their butter with water. They could not have the same amount of water in the butter made in various districts of the country. The weather and the temperature had a great effect, and no matter what a farmer might do he would have to leave more water in his butter at one time than at another. He thought it unfortunate that there should be two standards for Irish butter. There should be a uniform standard. He thought 16 per cent. was too low and 20 per cent. too high, and if the standard were made 18 per cent. he believed it would meet the views of that part of the country he represented.

Mr. GEORGE WHITELEY (Yorkshire, W.R., Pudsey) said that he did not wish to give a silent vote. Along with many other hon. Members he had experienced a good deal of difficulty in making up his mind whether to support or to oppose this Bill. He had, however, come to the same conclusion as the hon. Member for Devonport, but for entirely different reasons. It was not often that he could give even a qualified support to an Agricultural Bill of the present Government, and he acknowledged that some restrictions should be put on the amount of water in butter offered for sale as butter. They were all agreed that if the working man desired to buy butter he should be enabled to do so, and not incur the danger of having to pay for a great amount of water. But a great amount of Irish salt butter was sold in Lancashire—he had known of that from childhood—and the House should be very chary in doing anything to prevent the sale of that article. He objected to the use of the words "adulterated butter" in Clause 2. It appeared to him that these were most unfortunate words. They did not strike at water, but at something else—milk-blended butter. Why should a stigma be put on a good article of food which was cheap enough to be within the reach of all the people in the country? If the right hon. Gentleman was going to enforce the sale of milk-blended butter as adulterated butter, it would practically stop the sale of that article, because they all knew the working man objected to the word "adulterated." The hon. Member for Somerset said that the working man ought to be protected from adulteration, but if the working man was told that he was buying water-logged butter or milk-blended butter he would not be imposed upon. It was all a question of price. These articles were in every respect excellent articles of food, and he most strongly protested against the insertion of the words "adulterated butter" with the view of stopping their sale. If the right hon. Gentleman would say now that he had an open mind in regard to the use of the words "adulterated butter," he would gladly vote for the Second Reading of the Bill; but he was afraid that the right hon. Gentleman had not an open but a closed mind in this regard; and for these reasons he would most unwillingly have to vote against the Bill.

Sir JOSEPH DIMSDALE (London) thought that all would agree that the aim of this Bill was one which should be supported from every quarter of the House—viz., to put a stop to the sale of adulterated butter. But he hoped the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Agriculture would give him some assurance that he would insert a clause to enable sanitary inspectors to take, at any place, samples of butter or butter mixture which they considered might be of an adulterated character, and thus protect the retail sellers in the Metropolis. The Corporation of London, as the sanitary authority, already possessed powers to enable their sanitary inspectors to take samples of milk when those samples seemed by them likely to be injurious to health and life; and he should like to see all sanitary authorities granted similar powers in regard to butter and butter-mixtures. The public would thus be protected and the authorities would be able to strike home at those who were really responsible for sending adulterated articles into the market.

MR. LUNDON (Limerick, E.) said that the adulteration of butter and food supplies of every kind was very prevalent in England, and they did not seem to know where to stop or draw the line of demarcation. It would have been better for Ireland if margarine and blended butter had never been seen either there or in England. Butter by itself was not poisonous, and milk by itself was not poisonous; but when the two elements were put together, and the compound kept for two or three weeks, the amount of milk in it must soon become poisonous. Hon. Gentlemen would not like to have such butter on their own tables, but they were quite ready to say, "Let the working men have it." He spoke on this matter not only his own opinion but that of very many farmers' clubs, boards of guardians, and district councils in Limerick, Clare, and Tipperary. From the lordly Shannon to the Devil's Bit there was an area of over 600 square miles which contained only four creameries. What would happen to the farmers in that territory if Irish salt butter was not exempted? Why should the Minister for Agriculture introduce a time limit? It was put in to show that the farmers in Munster were slovenly, and were not prepared to take the times as they came; and, later, lecturers from Mr. Horace Plunkett's Department would be sent round to enlighten them. They had been making Irish firkin butter in Munster for a hundred years which defied all the competition of the English markets. These farmers had abandoned the old brown firkins, and now used white firkins. Everything was washed and properly prepared; and there was a great improvement all round. It might be possible that when railways were introduced into that part of Ireland to which he referred the promoters of creameries would decide to build creameries in the districts concerned; but when the creameries were built, the cost of the carriage of the cream and of the butter would have to be borne by the farmers, who would be bled through the nose.

When the Bill was before the House last session, a man wrote to him and asked if he intended to put the seal of dishonesty on dishonest butter. He wrote back and asked his correspondent if there was any creamery in his locality, but his correspondent did not reply. He then wrote to some friends in the locality, and found that his correspondent was connected with a creamery for which he did all the cartage; and, of course, he was prepared to say that black was white in favour of the people who employed him. Within the last forty-eight hours he had received a communication in direct contravention to all the other commmunications he had received, to the effect that Irish salt firkin butter could be made at the 16 per cent. standard. He replied that he did not wish to be insulted. He, however, wished to get behind the curtain and see who was there. It was the capitalist; he was everywhere in this fight. It was all a question of money, and a struggle between the capitalist and the poor unfortunate farmer. Every impostor in the world used the working man as his theme. Money was everything. Money was the motive power, the greatest power on this earth. It was responsible for everything that was wrong; and it was the motive power behind the opposition to this Bill. The capitalist could get every agency under Heaven to prove that he was right, and that everyone else was wrong. He saw in the Press recently a report of a deputation which represented the views of the Cork butter merchants to the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman was all candour; and he very candidly said that he discounted a great deal of what had been stated by the deputation. Some of their statements were grossly misleading; some were more or less true; but one at least was a downright falsehood. The deputation represented that a certain number of firkins containing Irish salt butter passed through their market every year; and that only 7 per cent. were over the 16 per cent. standard. He would tell hon. Members for their edification that very little salt butter was made in Cork at all. The butter there was composition butter, taken over by factory men, and put before the world by the Cork merchants as genuine Irish salt firkin butter.

The reasons why he supported the exemption of Irish salt firkin butter were numerous. For the most part the makers were poor farmers, many of them the poorest of the poor. In his own part of the country very few farmers were engaged in the industry, except the farmers who had turned away from the creameries. But there were other parts of Limerick and Clare not so favoured by Nature, consisting mainly of mountain bog, on which it was impossible to make butter on the 16 per cent. standard. If the farmers in these districts were deprived of their industry they would be thrown on the world. Forty or fifty years ago, when Ireland had 9,000,000 inhabitants, the farmers could raise, with the help of their sons, oats, barley, and in some districts wheat. But that day had passed, and would not return. The farmers' sons went to America to make their livelihood there. Some of the daughters were also in America and others were at home. But if they were deprived of this industry, what chance would the farmers have of making their living? At present, under the creamery system, boys were deprived of their education by having to spend half-a-day in taking milk to the creamery. This was a go-a-head age. They had now under-water machines, and machines that almost flew to Heaven; but in Ireland there were boys, who ought to be at school, driving donkeys, jennets, and horses to the creameries. Meantime, the creameries were playing pitch-and-toss with the farmers' interests, and the result was that there were lads of sixteen or seventeen years of age who were fit for nothing but the Militia. There were Militiamen by the thousand in the country, who not only could not use a pen, but who could not handle a flail or a hook.

*MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The hon. Member must pay more attention to the Bill before the House. He is rather wandering from the subject.

MR. LUNDON said that the Bill reminded him of the Procrustean bed, where the legs of the captives laid on it were cut off by the tyrant if they were too long.

*MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. Member to discuss the Bill before the House, which deals with adulterated butter.

MR. LUNDON said he only mentioned the Procrustean bed as an illustration of what the Bill was like. There were methods of destroying Ireland in every shape and form. One was landlordism; and now there was this attempt to destroy the Irish salt firkin butter, with the result that the farmers were between the Scylla of landlordism and the Charybdis of the gombeen merchant with his 16 per cent. standard. He would show that a revolution was possible in Ireland over this butter question.

*MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: It will not be in order for the hon. Member to enter into that.

MR. LUNDON said he did not intend to roam at large over the whole question, but he would inform the President of the Board of Agriculture that the time limit was a dangerous and insidious attempt to accomplish what would otherwise not have been possible. It was an all-round age of progress. Chemicals and electricity now ruled the world. It was even said that the deleterious matter in butter could be removed by the aid of chemicals, and that farmers could reduce the salt they used in butter from four pounds a firkin to two pounds. He did not think, however, that that was likely to occur in the immediate future, and he would impress on the Minister for Agriculture that the views of the supporters of the time limit were false and insidious.

MR. GILHOOLY (Cork County, W.) said they had heard a great deal of railway facilities being required under the Bill, and of the impossibility of adopting the 16 per cent. standard in the Cork districts. He came from West Cork, and although some portions of his constituency were distant from the railway, the people were entirely in favour of the 16 per cent. standard. Twenty-five years ago the people of West Cork had an antiquated system of making heavily-salted butter, but in order to compete with other farmers they abandoned that system, and now made butter that could command the best prices. He had received letters from merchants doing enormous business, who declared in favour of a 16 per cent. standard, and in one instance the writer had asserted that butter could be made at 12 per cent. The information given by the Trustees of Cork Market had been challenged, but before the Bill passed though Committee, those Gentlemen would satisfy the President of the Board of Trade of the accuracy of their statements, and that the information he had recently received was not correct. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman if in addition to the time limit he would allow the Cork Trustees to retain the 16 per cent. standard as the proper one for their brand, and to refuse any butter in the market over that standard. They believed it would be a retrograde step to adopt a 20 per cent. standard, and that it would strike a serious blow to the Irish butter industry in the United Kingdom.

MR. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy Burghs) said the issues of this Bill had been so fully debated that little remained to be said so far as the people were concerned, but before the debate closed he desired to associate himself with some of the objections made to the Measure. He associated himself with the objection made by the hon. Member for Islington with regard to the drafting of the Bill. It was simply monstrous that hon. Members had to spend hours in the library looking up previous statutes in order to understand it, and it was not to be expected that other people could understand it if Members had to go to this labour in referring to past legislation. Legislation by reference was a very bad system, and if he remembered rightly, the right hon. Gentleman himself in the past, was one of the most ardent critics of that system. It was interesting to observe while they were discussing the basis of the Bill, that the 16 per cent. standard in butter was not included either in this or any previous Bill. What had been done had been to give the Department power to issue a regulation establishing a 16 per cent. standard, and it was necessary to make the Bill plain, if only on that account. He was glad to hear that the right hon. Gentleman had no intention under his Bill of making adulteration legal, but as the Bill was drafted it would be possible for a trader to sell an adulterated article which only contained 10 per cent. of butter. Very possibly the right hon. Gentleman had it in his mind that the Margarine Act would cover that, but as a fact, it would not do anything of the kind, and therefore he was glad the point was to be considered in Committee. The only other point to which he wished to refer was identical treatment. If they were going to set up a standard for butter, everybody must be treated alike, and upon that question he hoped the hon. Gentleman would keep an open mind. If the standard was to be 16 per cent., let it be so, and if it was proved that Irish butter could not be made at 16 per cent., then he would say rather than have two standards they should split the difference and say it should be 18 per cent. all round. He believed in the long run that would be found to the interests of the Bill, and the Irish firkin butter industry as well. To retain a time limit he believed would be most dangerous.

MR. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE (Sussex, Horsham) said it was a new departure to sanction the sale of an article of food as an adulterated article, but it was perfectly right because, if the proportion of water was too great, the vendor would be liable. If this new departure was adopted he hoped it would be carried a great deal further, because one of the difficulties they met with in dealing with adulterated food products was the label on the articles themselves. It was possible for a man to mix his coffee or cocoa, and sell it as a mixture, in a neat package with an attractive label, accompanied by all manner of commendatory epithets. But who were imposed upon? The innocent person who took a fortnight's holiday in the country would naturally want to buy some country butter, and in the shop, alongside the good country butter, he would find somebody's milk-blended butter, done up in a nice little basket and so forth. Such a person really did not know he was buying milk-blended butter, and that was the class that required to be protected. He should support the Bill because it was intended to bring home to the purchaser what he was buying, and to render it impossible for the operation of the Food and Drugs Act to be defeated by the dealer sheltering himself behind some description of the mixture. The Bill took a long step in the direction of honest trading, and would protect a great industry; on that ground he should give it his cordial support.

Mr. BRIGG (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley) said there was no doubt that milk-blended butter was being sold, but who was injured thereby? The person who bought it was not, because he knew perfectly well what he was buying and desired to have it. The butter was supposed to be improved by the process to which it had been subjected, and if the public desired to have butter in that form he did not see why they should not have it. If it was possible to improve butter in ways not yet discovered, there was no reason why it should not be done, so long as the butter itself suffered no detriment. This particular article was simply an improved form of butter, and it was a mistake to call it adulterated butter.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) said that so far as the part of the country with which he was connected was concerned the right hon. Gentleman could rest assured that his Bill had the thorough approval of all interested. He hoped that when the measure got into Committee the right hon. Gentleman would not allow himself to be carried away by the suggestions which had been made, but would stand by the Bill, which had the approval of the vast majority of the people of the country.

Mr. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye), while agreeing that the phrase "adulterated butter" was an awkward one, thought the Bill deserved to go upstairs to the Grand Committee to be carefully considered in the light of the evidence, which would no doubt be referred to. There were, however, some important points in regard to which the Bill would require alteration. If there was one thing more important than another, it was that there should be no deterioration in the standard as set forth in a measure of this kind. If anything the standard should be raised rather than lowered, because all the progress and improvement of dairy operations tended in that direction.

Mr. O'MARA (Kilkenny, S.) contended that a time limit in the case of Irish butter would not meet the case, as the districts concerned would not be able to alter their methods in the time which had been suggested. At the same time he was strongly of opinion that a universal standard should be set up. But Irish firkin butter could not be brought within the 16 per cent. limit, and it was very doubtful whether all creamery and non-salted butter could be. The figures of the Cork Butter Market Trustees which had been quoted went to prove that 16 per cent. was an unworkable standard. He largely sympathised with the view that the proposed exemption would cast a slur on all Irish butter, and, therefore, would like to see a universal standard adopted. He would much prefer 20 per cent. to 16 per cent., but, failing 20 per cent., would like to see 18 per cent. fixed as the standard. The Bill was a very confused measure, and contained Clauses which no one could understand. Admittedly the measure did not do away with adulteration or with the milk blending of butter. He should like to see a stop put to fraud of all kinds in connection with food. This Bill allowed milk-blended butter up to 20 per cent. Why did the right hon. Gentleman not put a stop to this milk blending of butter altogether and adopt a standard that would be satisfactory to everybody?

Mr. O'MALLEY (Galway, Connemara) said that in the general interest of the Irish butter industry he was sorry to differ from some of his own colleagues upon this matter. The hon. Member for Cork favoured 16 per cent., while others favoured 20 per cent. of water. He was disposed to support the view expressed by his hon. colleague from the north of Ireland, who suggested that to meet the difficulties which were inevitable the best course would be to assume a medium course and fix the standard of butter at 18 per cent. water. He should be sorry to see the Irish firkin butter trade injured by this change, and he strongly recommended the right hon. Gentleman to carefully consider whether the medium course of a universal standard of 18 per cent. could not be adopted.

Mr. KEARLEY said if the House would allow him he should be glad to withdraw his Motion, because he was satisfied with the undertaking given by the President of the Board of Agriculture.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Mr. HANBURY: I move that this Bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Trade.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL pointed out that the Committee on Law was practically idle, and he thought if this Bill were referred to that Committee it would go through quicker. He suggested that it should be referred to the Standing Committee on Law instead of the Standing Committee on Trade.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY said he hoped his right hon. friend would not consent to that course, because there had been more Bills recently sent to the Standing Committee on Law. To refer this measure to a legal Committee would have the effect of leaving out those hon. Members who were interested in agricultural matters.

Lord EDMUND FITZMAURICE (Wiltshire, Cricklade) thought this was a Measure which ought rather to go to the Standing Committee on Trade.

Mr. O'MARA said he felt that this Bill ought not to be sent to a Committee at all. It was a measure of such general interest that it ought not to be referred to any Committee, because many hon. Members who took a keen interest in the subject would be deprived of any opportunity of taking part in the discussions on this Bill if it were sent to a Committee upstairs.

Mr. McGOVERN thought this measure would get through a Committee of the House in about an hour, and he did not think it should be sent to a Committee upstairs.

Mr. DALZIEL said he thought the right hon. Gentleman would probably get his Bill quicker through a Committee of the House than by sending it upstairs. He did not think this was a measure which ought to be passed quietly upstairs, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would see his way to take the measure in the House.

Committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc.

THE SHEEP SCAB BILL.

[Second Reading.]

Mr. DALZIEL said he hoped this Bill would not go through without a word of explanation from the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. HANBURY: This Bill requires very little explanation. It is intended to remedy what is undoubtedly a defect in the Diseases of Animals Act. Under the existing law the County Council, who are the local authority, only have to order dipping in two cases—namely, when the disease of sheep scab has actually broken out, or as a condition precedent to moving. What is desired is that the local authority shall have power to order dipping apart from either of those conditions, and it is simply to invest them with that power that the Bill is introduced.

Bill read a second time, and committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc.

CONTRACTS (INDIA OFFICE) BILL.

[Second Reading.]

The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Lord George Hamilton, Middlesex, Ealing): I beg to move the Second Reading of this Bill. When the powers of the East India Company were transferred to the Crown, it was enacted that all contracts made by the Secretary of State should be signed by two members of the Council. That was the usual practice; but there are certain transactions in regard to which it is very difficult, if not impossible, to get those signatures. All this Bill does is to give power to the Secretary of State to make contracts like the heads of other Departments.

Bill read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

BERWICKSHIRE COUNTY TOWN BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[MR. HENRY HOBHOUSE (Somersetshire, E.) in the Chair.]

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2,

MR. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy Burghs) asked for some information.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SCOTT DICKSON, Glasgow, Bridgton) briefly explained the objects of the clause.

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) asked the Solicitor-General for Scotland to state on behalf of the Government why it was proposed to change the county town. No substantial reason had yet been given why that change should take place.

Bill considered in Committee, and reported without Amendment; read a third time, and passed.

NAVAL FORCES BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. HENRY HOBHOUSE in the Chair.]

Clause 1,

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) said he did not propose to divide the Committee, but he wished to state that he was one of those who did not believe in the reconstitution of the Naval Volunteers. A most competent Committee had inquired into the subject, and their recommendation was one which, of course, would carry the greatest possible weight. He did not believe in the applicability of the Volunteer principle to service in the Fleet, and the kind of service to be required should be made known. There were certain very exceptional cases where Volunteers might be used with advantage for the Fleet. One case was that of Jersey, where there was ground for the existence of a limited Volunteer force of this kind. Language had been used in the Press, and perhaps by some hon. Members on a former stage of this Bill, to the effect that they might hope for a very large body of Volunteers to serve in the Fleet in time of war, but he thought that was an idle anticipation.

Clauses 1, 2, and 3 agreed to.

Clause 4,

*SIR CHARLES DILKE said this was the short service clause, and was the most important new departure made in connection with the Navy in modern times. It introduced a principle which he approved, but the application of which had hitherto been resisted at the Admiralty. The Committee ought to know how far it was intended to apply it now.

*THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. ARNOLD FORSTER, Belfast, W.) said he was glad that the principle was approved by the right hon. Baronet. The question of the number of short service men to be employed would not arise for many years. It must be a long time before any substantial proportion of the crews could be made up of these men. He really did not think it was necessary to go beyond the present intention of the Admiralty, which was to take a fourth of the ordinary seamen and A. B.s, and one-sixth trained men of the stokers, exclusive of petty officers, from this source. These men would not be in any sense Volunteers, because they would have five years experience of the sea.

Clauses 4, 5 and 6 agreed to.

MR. CALDWELL moved the following new clause—

> "All regulations made in pursuance of this Act shall be laid before Parliament as soon as practicable after they are made, if Parliament be then sitting, and, if Parliament be not sitting, as soon as practicable after the beginning of the next session of Parliament."

He supposed there would be no objection to this clause. What he proposed was in accordance with the practice of Parliament in all cases where the ordinary law was departed from. Similar provision was made in the Militia Act, the Army Act, and the Naval Act.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER declined to accept the clause. The precedents which the hon. Member had quoted were not applicable to the present case. There was no question in the Bill of giving powers to the Secretary of State to modify existing Acts of Parliament. This was new legislation, and the whole of the facts would come before the House in the ordinary way.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE said he was a strong supporter of the Admiralty, but he confessed he was not persuaded by the arguments of the hon. Gentleman at the present time. The short service provisions would be governed by Admiralty regulations, and he saw no reason for opposing the clause.

MR. CALDWELL said that what Parliament was asked to do was to give the Admiralty *carte blanche.* They were asked to empower the Admiralty to create a new force, and to make whatever regulations they thought fit. Obviously, the regulations made in pursuance of the Act ought to be placed before Parliament so that they might know what was being done.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER said that the hon. Gentleman made a mistake. There was no such obligation in regard to the Naval Volunteers, and there was no such obligation in regard to the Naval Reserve.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE said he wished again to impress on the hon. Gentleman that this clause had nothing to do with the Naval Volunteers. The case for the proposed new Clause rested on what was contained in Clause 4 of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question put, "That the clause be read a second time."

Committee divided:—Ayes, 76; Noes, 190. (Division List, No. 48.)

AYES.

Allan, Sir William (*Gateshead*)
Allen, Chas. P. (*Glos., Stroud*)
Asher, Alexander
Bayley, Thomas (*Derbyshire*)
Bell, Richard
Brigg, John
Broadhurst, Henry
Brown, Geo. M. (*Edinburgh*)
Burns, John
Burt, Thomas
Cawley, Frederick
Crooks, William
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Alfred (*Carmarthen*)
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dunn, Sir William
Evans, Sir F. H. (*Maidstone*)
Foster, Sir Walter (*Derby Co.*
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert J.
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Grant, Corrie
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-
Hayter, Rt Hon Sir Arthur D.
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hope, John Deans (*Fife, West*)
Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk.
Jacoby, James Alfred
Joicey, Sir James
Kearley, Hudson E.
Labouchere, Henry
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (*Accrington*
Leng, Sir John
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, David
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Mansfield, Horace Rendall
Morgan, J. Lloyd (*Carmarthen*
Morley, Rt Hon. John (*Montrose*
Palmer, Sir C. M. (*Durham*)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pease, J. A. (*Saffron Walden*)
Perks, Robert William
Rea, Russell
Redmond, William (*Clare*)
Reid, Sir R. Threshie (*Dumfries*
Robertson, Edmund (*Dundee*)
Robson, William Snowdon
Samuel, Herbt. L. (*Cleveland*)
Sandys, Lt.-Col. Thos. Myles
Shaw, Charles E. (*Stafford*)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Smith, Samuel (*Flint*)
Soares, Ernest J.
Spencer, Rt Hn C. R. (*Northants*
Stevenson, Francis S.
Strachey, Sir Edward
Taylor, Theo. C. (*Radcliffe*)
Tennant, Harold John
Thomas, David A. (*Merthyr*)
Thomas, F. Freeman-(*Hastings*)
Thomson, F. W. (*York, W. R.*)
Toulmin, George
Walton, J. Lawson (*Leeds, S.*)
Wason, E. (*Clackmannan*)
Wason, J. Cathcart (*Orkney*)
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Whiteley, G. (*York, W. R.*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Williams, O. (*Merioneth*)
Wilson, John (*Durham, Mid*)
Yoxhall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
Mr. Caldwell and Mr. Lough.

NOES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Allhusen, Aug. Henry Eden
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Arrol, Sir William
Atkinson, Right Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Austin, Sir John
Bailey, James (*Walworth*)
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Man'r*
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (*Hornsey*
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (*Leeds*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Bathurst, Hon. Allen Benj.
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bhownaggree, Sir M. M.
Bignold, Arthur
Bigwood, James
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Campbell, Rt. Hn. J. A (*Glasgow*
Campbell, J. H. M (*Dublin Univ.*
Cavendish, V C W (*Derbysh.*)
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Chamberlain, Rt Hon J (*Birm*
Chapman, Edward
Clare, Octavius Leigh
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Corbett, A. Cameron (*Glasg.*)
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Cox, Irwin Edwd. Bainbridge
Cranborne, Lord
Cripps, Charles Alfred
Cross, H. Shepherd (*Bolton*)
Crossley, Sir Savile
Dalkeith, Earl of
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Davenport, William Bromley
Davies, M. Vaughan (*Cardigan*
Denny, Colonel
Dickson, Charles Scott
Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon
Douglas Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir Wm. Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Hart
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Faber, E. B. (*Hants, W.*)
Faber, George Denison (*York*)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Fisher, William Hayes
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fitzroy, Hon. Edw. Algernon
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, Philip S (*Warwick, S. W*
Fyler, John Arthur
Galloway, William Johnson
Gardner, Ernest
Garfit, William
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (*Elgin & Nrn*
Gore, Hn. G R C. Ormsby-(*Salop*
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Eldon
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gray, Ernest (*West Ham*)
Hain, Edward
Halsey, Rt. Hon. Thomas F.
Hambro, Charles Eric
Hamilton, Rt Hn Ld. G. (*Midx*
Hamilton, Marq. of (*Londondy*
Hanbury, Rt. Hn. Robt. Wm.
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Hatch, Ernest Frederick G.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heath, Arthur H. (*Hanley*)
Heath, James (*Stafford, N. W.*
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Hoult, Joseph
Howard, J. (*Midd., Tott'ham*
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Kimber, Henry
Knowles, Lees
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*
Lawrence, Sir Jos. (*Monm'th*)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Fredk. N. S.
Llewellyn, Evan Henry
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Chas. W. (*Evesham*
Long, Rt. Hn. W. (*Bristol, S.*
Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred
Macdona, John Cumming
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
M'Killop, Jas. (*Stirlingshire*)
Malcolm, Ian
Manners, Lord Cecil
Markham, Arthur Basil
Maxwell, W J H (*Dumfriesshire*
Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Milvain, Thomas
Mitchell, William (*Burnley*)
Montagu, G. (*Huntingdon*)
Moon, Edward Robert Pacy
Morrell, George Herbert
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mount, William Arthur
Mowbray, Sir Robt. Gray C.
Muntz, Sir Philip A.
Murray, Rt Hn A. Graham (*Bute*
Murray, Col. Wyndham (*Bath*)
Myers, William Henry
Newdegate, Francis A. N.
Nicol, Donald Ninian
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Peel, Hn. Wm. R. Wellesley
Percy, Earl
Pierpoint, Robert
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Pretyman, Ernest George
Purvis, Robert
Pym, C. Guy
Renshaw, Sir Charles Bine
Ridley, Hon. M W. (*Stalybridge*
Ridley, S. F. (*Bethnal Green*)
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Robinson, Brooke
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Round, Rt. Hon. James
Russell, T. W.
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Seely, Maj. J. E. B (*Isle of Wight*
Seton-Karr, Sir Henry
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, H C (*North'mb. Tyneside*
Smith, Jas. Parker (*Lanarks.*)
Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (*Strand*)
Stanley, Edw. Jas. (*Somerset*)
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stewart, Sir M. J. M'Taggart
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Jn. M.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Sturt, Hn. Humphry Napier
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Talbot, Rt Hn. J. G. (*Oxf'd Univ.*
Thomas, J. A. (*Glam., Gower*)
Tollemache, Henry James
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. E. M.
Tufnell, Lieut.-Col. Edward
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. William Hall
Walrond, Rt. Hn. Sir William H
Wanklyn, James Leslie
Webb, Col. William George
Whiteley, H. *Ashton-und-Lyne*
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. S. (*York, E. R.*)
Wilson, J. W. (*Worcestersh., N.*
Wilson-Todd, W. H. (*Yorks.*)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (*Bath*
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B Stuart
Wrightson, Sir Thomas
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

Bill reported, without Amendment; to be read the third time to-morrow.

SUPPLY [26TH MARCH, AFTERNOON SITTING] —REPORT.

Resolution reported.

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1903–04.

“ That a sum not exceeding £1,920,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the charge for the staff for Engineer services, and expenditure for Royal Engineer works, buildings, and repairs, at home and abroad (including purchases), which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1904."

Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY [26TH MARCH, EVENING SITTING]—REPORT.

Resolutions reported.

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1903-4.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £1,186,300, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expenses of Naval and Marine Pensions, Gratuities, and Compassionate Allowances, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £259,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expenses of Medical Services, including the cost of Medical Establishments at Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1904."

3. "That a sum, not exceeding £15,500, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Martial Law, including the cost of Naval Prisons at Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

Resolutions agreed to.

SUPPLY [30TH MARCH, AFTERNOON SITTING]—REPORT.

Resolutions reported.

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1903-4.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £1,502,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Works, Buildings, and Repairs, at Home and Abroad, including the cost of Superintendence, Purchase of Sites, Grants in Aid, and other Charges connected therewith, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £2,292,500, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Victualling and Clothing for the Navy, including the cost of Victualling Establishments at Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

Resolutions agreed to.

SUPPLY [30TH MARCH, EVENING SITTING]—REPORT.

Resolutions reported.

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1903-4.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £4,820,030, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge for the Supply and Repair of Warlike and other Stores, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £1,745,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge for Chelsea and Kilmainham Hospitals, and the In-Pensioners thereof; for Out-Pensions; for the Maintenance of Lunatics for whom Pensions are not drawn; for Gratuities awarded in Commutation and in lieu of Pensions; for Rewards for Meritorious Services; for Victoria Cross Pensions; and for Pensions, etc., to the Widows and Children of Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and Men, etc., which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

3. "That a sum, not exceeding £195,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge for Civil Superannuation, Compensation, and Compassionate Allowances and Gratuities, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1904."

Resolutions agreed to.

And, there being no further business set down for the Afternoon Sitting, Mr. Deputy-Speaker left the Chair till this Evening's Sitting.

EVENING SITTING.

BAKER STREET AND WATERLOO RAILWAY (TRANSFER) BILL [BY ORDER].

[SECOND READING.]

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth), who had given notice that he intended to move the rejection of the Bill, said that the ground of his opposition was that Clause 5 would enable the promoters to take certain lands belonging to private owners without paying compensation. As an undertaking had been given that the Clause should be removed in Committee, he did not propose to offer any opposition to the Bill.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton) objected to Clause 8 of the Bill, which, he said, provided that the undertaking of the Baker Street and Waterloo Railway should be transferred to the United Underground Electric Company of London. Pending satisfactory assurances, he formally moved the rejection of the Bill.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Mr. Claude Hay.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

*MR. PERKS (Lincolnshire, Louth) said that Clause 8 would be struck out, and the whole question of the amalgamation of these underground lines would, no doubt, be dealt with by the Royal Commission on London Locomotion.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL (TRAMWAYS AND IMPROVEMENTS) BILL. [BY ORDER.]

SIR FREDERICK BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said the object of the Instruction he now proposed to move was to omit from the London County Council Tramways and Improvements Bill the tramway which was to run across Westminster Bridge and then down the Victoria Embankment, as far as Waterloo Bridge, a distance of about one mile. There were two reasons on which this Instruction might be supported. The first was that the tramway was unnecessary, that it would add considerably to the congestion of traffic which already existed on Westminster Bridge, and would create a congestion which did not now exist on the Victoria Embankment. The second reason was perhaps stronger; it was this—that a Royal Commission was now sitting to enquire into the whole of the locomotion of London, and that being so, it was rather extraordinary that at this particular time a Bill should be introduced having for its object the making of this tramway. For the last ten or twelve years Bills introduced for this object had been defeated either in this House or in another place. It could not be denied that a tramway across Westminster Bridge must cause a considerable congestion. Westminster Bridge as it stood was a very fine bridge, and that being so, he was prepared to leave it in the state in which it now stood, and not to injure it by putting upon it a weight and a burden which it could not bear. Two lines of tramways occupied a considerable space, and if they were laid on Westminster Bridge there could not possibly be any doubt but what there would be a considerable amount of congestion. He believed one of the great reasons for the congestion in London streets was the cross traffic. Hon. Members had only to go to Hyde Park Corner to see the reason of the blocks which occurred there was the cross traffic coming into Piccadilly from Park Lane, and the same thing was apparent in all the different large centres in London where great congestion of traffic occurred. He believed at the Mansion House the police were obliged every three or four minutes to stop the traffic in order to let the cross traffic pass. If a tramway passed over Westminster Bridge it would immediately have to turn to the right to go on to the Victoria Embankment and that would cause a considerable congestion of traffic just opposite this House. He did not wish to put his opinion before the House as being worth anything, although he had had a considerable amount of experience of the traffic in London streets.

The hon. Member then referred to the evidence taken before the Royal Commission of 1892, to show that in the opinion of the expert witnesses examined, a tramway passing over Westminster Bridge and taking up and setting down passengers would create considerable congestion of traffic immediately in front of the Houses of Parliament. Having pointed out what would happen there, what, he asked, would happen at Waterloo Bridge? Hon. Members must remember that it was not proposed that the tramway should run the whole length of the Embankment, it was only to run as far as Waterloo Bridge. Hon. Members had often said they would not object to a tramway right along the Embankment, because it would provide a pleasant method of coming to this House, but this Bill did not carry out that view because these tramways stopped at Waterloo Bridge, where they turned to the left and met a tramway which went into the ground and under the new road which was being made to Holborn. There consequently would be another line of cross traffic at Waterloo Bridge which would join with something that came out from underground. The present cross traffic coming down the Savoy was comparatively nothing, but if there was to be a heavy cross traffic, disappearing somewhere at Holborn into the ground and coming out of the ground on to the Embankment, it could not be doubted for a moment that there would be considerable congestion at Waterloo Bridge. The Embankment was created in order to give relief to the traffic of the Strand and to provide a route for fast traffic from east to west, and it was convenient that there should be a relief route of that kind down which people might go when they were in a hurry. Of course, it might be urged that this tramway would be a very great advantage to people who lived in South London, but, in answer to that, he would say that he presumed it was not intended that the people were to be conveyed on this tramway for nothing, and that being so there was at present a line of omnibuses plying across the Bridge from Westminster to Charing Cross every half minute at a charge of one halfpenny for the journey, and that being so, the proposed tramway was unnecessary. It might be said also that it was desirable to have a direct route from north to south, and no doubt that might be so, but if that was desirable then he thought that line should be underground entirely, and go under the river. This he understood could be carried out at a cost of £300,000. He submitted that there was sufficient evidence at all events to show that this matter ought to be deferred until the Royal Commission had had an opportunity of sifting and weighing all the evidence and giving their opinion upon it. A Royal Commission was now sitting to investigate the question of the locomotion of London, and no one would deny but that Westminster Bridge was a very important part of London, and, that being the case, it should come within the purview of the Royal Commission. He therefore appealed with confidence to the House, and to the division which would take place later on, to support the Instruction which he now begged to move.

MR. COHEN (Islington, E.) said he rose to second the Motion of the hon. Member for Peckham, but not entirely on the same grounds. During the ten or eleven years he had been in this House, he had always steadily opposed a tramway over Westminster Bridge, and had always steadily opposed a tramway down the Embankment. As time had advanced, the question of finding a main arterial communication between North and South London had become more and more urgent. The consideration which governed his decision was that, having left this matter undealt with for ten or eleven years, we should not settle it in a hurry now, but await the decision of the competent tribunal to which this matter had been referred. The fact that the Royal Commission was sitting was the strongest possible reason why the House should suspend judgment on this matter pending the Report of that body. There was no paramount urgency for this tramway, because during the day of fifteen hours there were ninety-eight omnibuses making 1972 journeys, or 131 journeys per hour, over Waterloo Bridge, and ninety-eight omnibuses, making 1,910 journeys per day of fifteen hours, or 120 journeys per hour, over Westminster Bridge. He was not at all moved by the æsthetic consideration that tramways would disfigure the Embankment; he did not think they would; but the whole of this question was at present *sub judice*, and he thought the House ought to wait until it received the Report of the competent body of experts who were considering the matter. He begged to second the proposed Instruction.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill to omit Tramway No. 7."—(*Sir Frederick Banbury.*)

MR. CUMMING MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe) said that to stand in the way of the North and South meeting either across Westminster or any other bridge would be a thoroughly obstructive policy. In this progressive age it would be to the benefit of London that intercourse between all districts should be made as easy as possible, and no one would deny that electricity and its developments afforded the most agreeable and expeditious method by which that could be done. He could not see why his constituents should be deprived of the privilege of coming by tram to admire the Houses of Parliament and going on to Hyde Park, or why the inhabitants of the West End should not be able to visit Southwark Park in a similar way.

MR. WHITMORE (Chelsea) thought it a remarkable fact that the promoters of the Bill had not had the courtesy to make any statement as to the reasons why a proposal which had time after time been defeated, should now be supported by the House. The proposal of last year was a purely local matter, whereas the present scheme raised the serious question of the means of intercommunication between the great populations of North and South London. That was a problem which ought to be discussed without any party spirit, with the simple view of arriving as rapidly as possible at the best solution. Was the proposal now made the best solution? Apart from the fact that the Royal Commission was sitting, he thought it could hardly be seriously suggested that a route over Westminster Bridge and along the Embankment was the best way by which to effect the inter-communication that was so much desired. Moreover, it was not at all certain that the Commission would recommend tramways as the best means of locomotion. He had no desire to contest the question on any narrow grounds, but the matter was one of such great importance that he thought it would be premature to act before the Royal Commission had reported.

SIR J. BLUNDELL MAPLE (Camberwell, Dulwich) supported the Instruction on the ground that to bring a tramway over Westminster Bridge was a wrong policy altogether. The great multitude of the people crossed further eastward, and the connecting link between north and south should be in that direction so as to join with the new Kingsway. There was no great demand at present for increased carrying accommodation across Westminster Bridge; it would be time enough to bring this matter forward when the Commission had reported. The County Council were trying to get all sorts of powers, which, when secured, they frequently did not exercise, and he expected that if they carried this proposal they would simply take the tramways over the bridge and stop on the north side, without effecting any communication between north and south.

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) said the authority to decide as to the necessity of tramways was not the House of Commons, but the London County Council as created by Parliament. Both parties on the County Council had decreed that a tramway across Westminster bridge was desirable in the interest of better communication between North and South, and when the Company proposed to take the lines over the bridge the County Council supported them. The construction of a tramway across the bridge would remove the congestion which now prevailed on the Surrey side of the bridge between St. Thomas's Hospital and York Road, in a roadway only thirty-three feet wide. The congestion at this dead end of the present tramway system was so obvious that hon. Members themselves must have noticed it on a race day, on a review day, or when hurrying in a cab to Waterloo Station in order to play golf. They proposed instead of having a dead-end terminus that there should be a continuous route across an eighty-six feet wide bridge turning to the right down the Embankment. The Embankment where it met the junction on the north side was 120 feet wide. Whenever they had a continuous tramway the congestion was bound to be much less. Instead of adding to the congestion of the traffic at this point it would decrease it, and it was on the Surrey side that they desired to remove the congestion by carrying the tramway across Westminster Bridge. The hon. Baronet the Member for Peckham had said that congestion would be increased on the Embankment, but everyone would admit that the Embankment was wide enough for a traffic four times its present volume.

SIR FREDERICK BANBURY: The Embankment is not 120 feet wide.

MR. JOHN BURNS said that at the point he referred to the Embankment was 120 feet wide, but that its average width was about 100 feet. Lieutenant-Colonel Yorke, who was the chief witness before the Royal Commission, had stated that Westminster Bridge was a desirable place for a tramway, and he also declared that the Embankment seemed a route eminently suitable for tramway traffic. The hon. Baronet the Member for Peckham had referred to the cross traffic. He would remind the House that the cross traffic at Hyde Park Corner had been considerably mitigated by the County Council having effected the widening of Piccadilly. Then there was the police evidence. He noticed that the hon. Baronet the Member for Peckham had a habit of always asking the police when in doubt. The hon. Baronet had quoted police evidence given in 1892, but why did he not tell the House that Parliament Street was then only fifty feet wide, and now it was 110 feet wide?

SIR F. BANBURY: But this Bill has nothing to do with Parliament Street.

MR. JOHN BURNS said Parliament Street was then one-third of its present width, and the congestion of traffic had been removed.

SIR F. BANBURY said that Parliament Street had nothing whatever to do with this Bill, because the tramway proposed would not go down Parliament Street, but would turn down the Embankment.

MR. JOHN BURNS said the hon. Baronet ought to have asked the cabman who drove him down to the House for some information upon these points.

SIR F. BANBURY: I walked down.

MR. JOHN BURNS said that since the widening of Parliament Street the congestion of traffic had abated on the north side. The hon. Baronet stated that what was wanted was relief to the Strand, but that would be secured by allowing the passengers who stopped on the Surrey side to come along upon a continuous tramway across Westminster Bridge and down the Embankment, discharging passengers at Northumberland Avenue, and at the various streets between there and Waterloo Bridge. An omnibus carried twenty-six people, but an electric tramcar would carry between seventy and seventy-two passengers, and when it was realised that one tramcar could carry three times as many passengers as an omnibus it would be seen that this must be a great relief to the Strand, and would also remove the congestion on the Surrey side, diminishing the congestion on the bridge, and allowing a free flow of the traffic down Parliament Street and to the West End of London. The best judges as to which was the best route for a tramway or omnibus service were the Progressive and Moderate members of the London County Council, and they had agreed that the cheapest and best route was *viâ* Westminster Bridge, down the Embankment to Waterloo Bridge to the congested portion of the Strand, and then along Theobalds Road to Hampstead, Highgate, and elsewhere. The alternative route was to spend £500,000 of money upon a subway under the River

Thames from the Rev. Newman Hall's church in Westminster Bridge Road to near Birdcage Walk. Such a scheme would impose upon the London County Council a needless burden.

What were the objections to this Bill? Was the bridge too narrow? Certainly not. Next to the Alexandre III. Bridge in Paris, Westminster Bridge was the widest in Europe. Last year the House of Lords unanimously allowed the County Council to run an electric tramway over Putney Bridge, which was only twenty-five feet wide. Surely it was ridiculous and absurd for the House of Commons to deny this right to construct a tramway across a bridge three times as wide. Hon. Members should go to the tramway terminus at Westminster and Blackfriars Bridges and see for themselves the people fighting to get in and out of the tramcars. This had become a scandal, and it was a danger to life and property. The opposition to this Bill was being carried on simply in the interest of a few omnibus proprietors, who were not at present giving the public as good a service over the bridges as the County Council did in the past. They had already got the right to construct tramways over Putney and Battersea Bridges, and also over Vauxhall Bridge, and he appealed to the House in the interests of thousands of people who desired this tramway, to allow the County Council to carry out its primary duty of giving a cheap, easy, and north-to-south communication by tram over Westminster Bridge. If the House of Commons adopted this Bill, the County Council would do everything in its power to see that all the interests concerned were properly served, as they deserved to be. By carrying out this Embankment tramway the Council were pursuing the line of least resistance, and were giving London that communication which the people had long asked for, and which this House had long denied.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BONAR LAW, Glasgow, Blackfriars) said that when this subject was before the House upon the last occasion, the Board of Trade took no part in the discussion. If the present proposal had been made under similar circumstances, the Board of Trade would not have sought to influence the decision of the House. It did, however, appear to the Board of Trade that the appointment of a Royal Commission on London Locomotion made a difference, the importance of which must be felt even by the hon. Member for Battersea. Speaking for the Board of Trade he felt bound to urge the House to agree to the Instruction which had been moved by his hon. friend pending the Report of the Royal Commission. The principle upon which the Board of Trade had proceeded during the whole of this session in regard to such measures, had been, that whenever a Private Bill was introduced which did not seem to run counter to the duties of the Royal Commission, the Board of Trade should facilitate the passing of such a Bill to a Committee. No one could contend that the present proposal was one of that kind. The very duty which the Royal Commission was called upon to perform was not merely in what direction particular lines should go, but it had quite as much, and perhaps more, to decide what particular mode of locomotion should be adopted in particular localities. It was possible at least that the Commission might recommend that street tramways were a bad mode of locomotion in any district where traffic was heavy. He wished to refer to what the hon. Member for Battersea had said about the evidence of Lieutenant-Colonel Yorke. He had read that evidence himself, and he was perfectly certain that the hon. Member had drawn exactly the opposite inference to that which Lieutenant-Colonel Yorke stated. He was giving evidence against tramways in congested districts, and in reply to a question he said that such a street as that across Westminster Bridge would be suitable for a tramway.

MR. JOHN BURNS: And also along the Embankment.

MR. BONAR LAW said that the whole of Lieutenant-Colonel Yorke's evidence was in the direction that Westminster Bridge would not be suitable for a tramway. The question was, whether it was reasonable to appoint a Commission and decide the question which the Commission had been appointed to consider? If that view were taken, it could only be on the ground that the House attached no importance to the Commission, and did not expect from it a Report of any value. To allow such an important subject as this to be taken out of the scope of the Commission would be disrespectful to that body. He did not propose to go into the question of the merits of the proposal. The argument that this was to be a great through route between North and South London was surely a reason for not allowing the proposal to go through. The Commission which was inquiring into these matters might admit the need of communication and yet be of opinion that a tramway over Westminster Bridge was not the best means of accomplishing that object. That was the kind of question which the Commission had been formed to decide upon. For these reasons, and especially in view of the fact that if this tramway was once allowed it would inevitably become the centre of a large north and south traffic, which must continually grow, because all other systems of tramways on the north and south would have to be made to meet this system, he hoped the House would agree to this Instruction. Without, therefore, any prejudice to the County Council, and without prejudging the question, on the sole ground that the House ought to respect the Commission which had been appointed, he hoped the Instruction would be agreed to.

SIR WILLIAM TOMLINSON (Preston) said that Westminster Bridge was one of the main means of access to the House of Commons, and no doubt this question was involved in the consideration as to whether a tramway ought to be constructed across Westminster Bridge. He remembered the old Westminster Bridge, and one of the reasons why the old bridge was removed and the present one built was that the traffic of the old Westminster Bridge was always in a congested condition, and that was one of the matters which the builders of the new bridge had in mind in constructing it upon its present dimensions. In the construction of the present bridge great attention was paid to the question of dealing with the large amount of traffic, and the mode suggested was to provide two lines intended to be occupied by the slow traffic, and two lines by the quick traffic. It was thought that if one roadway each way was set apart for the quick traffic, and one each way for the slow traffic, the vehicles would pass along without obstruction. It was very soon found, however, that that was an error, and that the only way of making the traffic easy was to abolish that system and leave the roadway free to every kind of traffic. The effect of constructing tramways across Westminster Bridge would be to reproduce that very thing which it was sought to obviate. They would have two roadways taken up by the tramway and only one road each side would be left for the traffic. The result would be that things would be worse than they were before the new bridge was built. Congested as traffic was now on many occasions, it was obvious that it would be far worse if tramways were constructed on Westminster Bridge. Whatever had been decided with regard to Putney and Battersea Bridges, he thought they ought to leave Westminster Bridge free for the present traffic. If they required another bridge over the Thames for the tramways, they ought to construct some other means across the river. Something had been said about a subway under the river. But he thought the resources of science were not exhausted, and some other means might be found of bringing the tramways across the river.

*MR. BURDETT-COUTTS (Westminster) said the City of Westminster was perhaps more interested in this question than any other local authority in London. He shared the surprise of the hon. Member for Chelsea at the extraordinary spectacle witnessed a few moments ago, when hon. Members whose Bill had been attacked did not rise to defend it or to argue their case, but simply expressed their opinions by cries of "Vote" and "Divide." It was perfectly obvious that they wished to snatch a division while these Benches were empty. Nor could he congratulate the hon. Member for Battersea on the extraordinary attitude he took up with regard to the relations between this House and the London County Council. He laid it down that this House was not the authority for tramways, but that the London County Council was. If that was so, why was this Bill before the House? And the hon. Member proceeded to say in his most magisterial manner that the London County Council had decreed unanimously that this measure should be carried, a measure which he would remind the House had over and over again been rejected by the House. Had they come then to this position, that the London County Council was a superior authority to this House?

MR. JOHN BURNS remarked that he never said, neither did he imply, what the hon. Member stated. What he said was that the question whether a tramway was necessary on Westminster Bridge, was not, with all respect to Parliament, so much one for Parliament as for the highway authority which Parliament itself had created.

*MR. BURDETT-COUTTS did not think the hon. Member had made his case any better. He understood the hon. Member to argue that the London County Council was the authority for tramways and not this House, and that, therefore, the Council and not the House should decide on this measure. Was not that diminishing the authority of the House, and placing the London County Council in a superior position to it in regard to this question? He would not trouble the House with any comments on the merits of the case, but he would ask whether the House should forestall the decision of the Royal Commission which was sitting on this matter. Was it possible for them to say that the Royal Commission would not take an entirely different view from that which had been taken by the London County Council? The Royal Commission might decide that a tramway over Westminster Bridge was not the best way to establish communication between the southern and the northern systems of tramways. The most reasonable method of carrying out that project might be found to be by means of a tramway over Blackfriars Bridge. Anyone who was acquainted with the districts or who looked at the map would know that there was a great system of tramways on the South side running up to Blackfriars Bridge, and a great system on the North side running down to within a short distance of the same bridge. The most obvious coupling-up of the North and South would be across Blackfriars Bridge. If that would solve a great part of the problem it should, at least, be undertaken before a tramway was laid across Westminster Bridge, which would inflict great injury in various quarters. Last year the London County Council promoted a Bill in which there was nothing about carrying a tramway over Westminster Bridge, but in which it was proposed to place a tramway from nowhere to nowhere on the Embankment. He did not think that the real object the County Council had in view had been put forward in any of these proposals. He believed their object was to carry their tramway to Charing Cross, and thence through Regent Street and Piccadilly, and other West End thoroughfares, and down Victoria Street. There was an obvious proof of this. When the County Council took over the halfpenny omnibuses which crossed the bridge, did they ever turn them to the right along the Embankment? No, they ran them all to Charing Cross. They wanted to do the same thing with their tramway when they got it across Westminster Bridge. With all the 'bus proprietors watching to find new routes where the traffic would justify their running, not a single omnibus had ever turned along the Embankment from Westminster Bridge. He submitted that there was no need for a tramway over Westminster Bridge unless the House was prepared to sanction tramways through the already impassable streets of the West End, which was the real object behind this proposal. The debt of the London County Council had nearly doubled in thirteen years, and in the same period the rates of London had been increased nearly 40 per cent.

MR. JOHN BURNS: No!

*MR. BURDETT-COUTTS said he would give the figures. In 1889 the rate was 1s. 0½d., and it was now 1s. 4¾d.—

that was very nearly 40 per cent. Was this the moment for making a great capital expenditure on a speculation enterprise? He asked the House to vote in favour of the Instruction, which rejected the proposal to embark an enormous sum of the ratepayers' money to-day in a project which the Royal Commission might reject as unwise to-morrow.

MR. ALFRED DAVIES rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put," but Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate resumed.

SIR GEORGE BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said he had always voted for this tramway, and he should like to give the reason why he could not vote for it now. The circumstances were quite different now from what they were last year. He was a member of the Royal Commission, and, therefore, could not take part in the division. This was not simply, as it was last year, a question of facilitating traffic along the Embankment and across Westminster Bridge. It had become a question whether the House should sanction North and South communication by this tramway. Very largely increased facilities were wanted between North and South London. That was one of the points the Commission had to consider, and if he were to vote either way on this Motion, he should be prejudicing the case. There was no desire on the part of the Commission to postpone their work, and he hoped that before long this matter would be considered.

*MR. THORNTON (Clapham) said this scheme was much needed by the people living in the district he represented. They desired transit facilities for reaching Holborn and the districts beyond without being forced to go underground. Last year a majority declared in favour of the Bill. [AN HON. MEMBER: Not over Westminster Bridge.] It was a Bill for a tramway on the Embankment it must be admitted which gained that majority and suffered reversal in another place, but the two schemes were inseparable. The working classes informed him that it was their desire that the scheme should be carried out in order that they might be able to go to their business in the cheapest and best way. He maintained that it was impossible for the Royal Commission to tell them more on this matter than they already knew. Although politically opposed to the hon. Member for Battersea, he would vote with him to-night, because he thought he was right.

*MR CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton) regarded this Bill from the point of view of a Londoner. In fact he was neutral in the matter except so far as the scheme affected London as a whole. He was much impressed by what fell from the hon. Member for North Islington, who reminded the House that the Royal Commission was charged to deal with the question of locomotion as a whole. The proposed tramway across Westminster Bridge and down the Embankment could not be regarded—he said it with all deference to the hon. Member for Clapham—as a local matter affecting South London. It was part of the general system of London locomotion, and was therefore a matter which should be considered by the Commission. He was amused at the enthusiasm shown by the hon. Member for Battersea in support of this measure. It was only the other day that a Bill which had been passed by three Joint Committees, and which would give facilities to the North and East of London, was opposed by the hon. Member He was struck by another observation that fell from the hon. Member. He said the width of Westminster Bridge was 86 feet. At a matter of fact it was 54 feet 3 inches. That had a very considerable bearing on the amount of congestion which a tramway across Westminster Bridge would create. He did not think it was quite fair for the hon. Member to say that this tramway had the warm approval of Colonel Yorke. He thought that any impartial reader of Colonel Yorke's evidence must come to the conclusion that he was not in favour of it. He wished to see a general system for the whole of London, and he was glad that a Royal Commission which would take a broad view of the question had been appointed.

MR. HENRY HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.) said that he had last year the honour of sitting on the Select Committee which investigated the proposal to place a tramway on the Embankment. The Committee passed that tramway, and he asked the House to sanction the decision of the Committee. It was absolutely necessary that some means of communication between the tramways on the north side and the south side of the river should be found, but it was very difficult to say whether that means should be by Westminster Bridge or by an entirely new bridge. They were that day in a very different position from twelve months ago. A very strong and competent Commission had been appointed to investigate the question of London traffic as a whole, and he thought the promoters of this tramway line should withdraw their proposal, and bring it forward after the Commission had presented their Report. It was for that reason alone that he would give his vote against proceeding with the Bill in the present session. It would be a waste of time and money to have a question like that involved investigated by two different bodies.

COLONEL PILKINGTON (Lancashire, Newton) said that when it was proposed to spoil London and desecrate its best sites by any scheme, country Members like himself ought not to sit quiet without entering their protest. He was opposed to the tramways crossing Westminster Bridge, and he thought the expenditure of £500,000 in providing another means, under or over the river, of connecting the tramways of North and South London would pay over and over again. There was no reason for the present hurry, and the question should not be pre-judged before the Report of the Royal Commission was prepared and laid before Parliament.

Question put.

House divided:—Ayes, 134; Noes, 133. (Division List No. 49.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir A. F.
Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther, H. T.
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arrol, Sir William
Atkinson, Right Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hon Sir H
Bailey, James (*Walworth*)
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (*Leeds*
Bathurst, Hon. Allen Benj.
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bignold, Arthur
Bigwood, James
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bowles, Lt-Col. H. F. (*Middlesex*
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Campbell, J. H M. (*Dublin Univ.*
Cavendish, R. F. (*N. Lancs.*)
Cavendish, V C W (*Derbysh.*)
Chapman, Edward
Charrington, Spencer
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Cox, Irwin Edwd. Bainbridge
Cranborne, Viscount
Cross, H. Shepherd (*Bolton*)
Crossley, Sir Savile
Dalkeith, Earl of
Davenport, William Bromley
Denny, Colonel
Dickinson, Robert Edmond
Dickson, Charles Scott
Disraeli, Coningsby Ralph
Dixon-Hartland, Sir F. Dixon
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Doxford, Sir Wm. Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Faber, E. B. (*Hants, W.*)
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Ed.
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S.W.*
Fyler, John Arthur
Garfit, William
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (*Elgin & Nrn*
Gore, Hn. G. R C. Ormsby-(*Salop*
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
Greene, Sir E. W. (*Bury St. Ed.*
Groves, James Grimble
Hambro, Charles Eric
Hamilton, Rt Hn Ld. G. (*Midx*
Hamilton, Marq. of (*Londondy*
Hanbury, Rt. Hn. Robt. Wm.
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Heath, James (*Staffs., N. W.*)
Henderson, Sir Alexander
Hobhouse, Rt Hn H (*Somrst E*
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Horner, Frederick William
Hoult, Joseph
Howard, J. (*Midd., Tott'ham*
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Johnstone, Heywood
Knowles, Lees
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*
Lawson, John Grant
Lee, A. H. (*Hants, Fareham*)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Fredk. N. S.
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Long, Rt. Hn. W. (*Bristol, S.*
Lowther, Rt. Hon. Jas. (*Kent*)
Maconochie, A. W.
M'Killop, Jas. (*Stirlingshire*)
Majendie, James A. H.
Manners, Lord Cecil
Maple, Sir John Blundell
Maxwell, W J H (*Dumfriesshire*
Middlemore, Jn. Throgmorton
Milvain, Thomas
Montagu, G. (*Huntingdon*)
Moon, Edward Robert Pacy
Morgan, D. J. (*Walthamstow*)
Muntz, Sir Philip A.
Murray, Rt Hn A Graham (*Bute*
Murray, Col. Wyndham (*Bath*)
Myers, William Henry
Newdegate, Francis A. N.
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Percy, Earl
Pierpoint, Robert
Pilkington, Lt.-Col. Richard
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Pretyman, Ernest George
Purvis, Robert
Quilter, Sir Cuthbert
Ridley, Hon. M. W. (*Stalybridge*

Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Scott, Sir S. (*Marylebone, W.*)
Seely, Maj. J E B. (*Isle of Wight*)
Seton-Karr, Sir Henry
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (*Ren-*
Smith, H C (*North'mb. Tyneside*
Stanley, Hon. A. (*Ormskirk*)
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Jn. M.
Sturt, Hn. Humphrey Napier
Talbot, Rt Hon J G (*Oxf' d Univ.*
Taylor, Austin (*East Toxteth*)
Tollemache, Henry James
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. E. M.
Valentia, Viscount
Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir W. H.
Wanklyn, James Leslie
Webb, Col. William George
Whiteley, H. (*Ashton-u.-Lyne*)
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson-Todd, W. H. (*Yorks.*)
Wodehouse, Rt Hon. E. R (*Bath*)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wrightson, Sir Thomas

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Frederick Banbury and Mr. W. F. D. Smith.

NOES.

Abraham, W. (*Cork, N.E.*)
Allan, Sir William (*Gateshead*)
Allen, Chas. P. (*Glos., Stroud*)
Allhusen, Aug. Henry Eden
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hon. Herbt. Hy.
Austin, Sir John
Bayley, Thomas (*Derbyshire*)
Bell, Richard
Boland, John
Bolton, Thomas Dolling
Brigg, John
Broadhurst, Henry
Brown, Geo. M. (*Edinburgh*)
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland
Burns, John
Burt, Thomas
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Cawley, Frederick
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Cremer, William Randal
Crooks, William
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Davies, Alfred (*Carmarthen*)
Davies, M. Vaughan (*Cardign*
Delany, William
Delvin, Chas. Ramsay (*Galway*
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Doogan, P. C.
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Elibank, Master of
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Evans, Sir F. H. (*Maidstone*)
Evans, Saml. T. (*Glamorgan*)
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (*Leith*
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
Foster, Sir Walter (*Derby Co.*
Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Grant, Corrie
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm.
Hardie, J. Keir (*Merthyr Tyd*
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-
Hope John Deans (*Fife, West*
Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk
Jacoby, James Alfred
Joicey, Sir James
Jones, David B. (*Swansea*)
Jones, Wm. (*Carnarvonshire*)
Labouchere, Henry
Law, H. Alex. (*Donegal, W.*)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leese, Sir Jos. F. (*Accrington*)
Leigh, Sir Joseph
Leng, Sir John
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, David
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Macdona, John Cumming
MacDonnell, Dr. Mark A.
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
M'Fadden, Edward
M'Govern, T.
M'Kenna, Reginald
Mansfield, Horace Rendall
Markham, Arthur Basil
Morgan, J. Lloyd (*Carmarthen*)
Morley, Rt Hon John (*Montrose*
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Moulton, John Fletcher
Murphy, John
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nolan, Col. J. P. (*Galway, N.*)
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Brien, K. (*Tipperary, Mid*)
O'Brien, Patrick (*Kilkenny*)
O'Doherty, William
O'Dowd, John
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Pease, J. A. (*Saffron Walden*)
Peel, Hn. Wm. R. Wellesley
Rea, Russell
Redmond, Jn. E. (*Waterford*)
Redmond, William (*Clare*)
Robson, William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rose Charles Day.
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Sadler, Col. Saml. Alexander
Samuel, Herbt. L. (*Cleveland*)
Samuel, S. M. (*Whitechapel*)
Schwann, Charles E.
Shackleton, David James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Spencer, Rt Hn C R. (*Northants*)
Stevenson, Francis S.
Sullivan, Donal
Taylor, Theodore C (*Radcliffe*)
Thomas, A. (*Carmarthen, E.*)
Thomas, Sir A. (*Glam., E.*)
Thomas, David A. (*Merthyr*)
Thomas, F. Freeman (*Hastings*)
Thomas, J. A. (*Glam., Gower*)
Thomson, F. W. (*York, W. R.*)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Walton, J. Lawson (*Leeds, S.*)
Warner, Thos. Courtenay T.
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Whiteley, G. (*York, W. R.*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Wilson, John (*Durham, Mid*)
Wilson, J. W. (*Worcester., N.*)
Woodhouse, Sir J T (*Hudders'fd*
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Herbert Gladstone and Mr. Causton.

LABOUR REPRESENTATION.

MR. CROOKS (Woolwich) called attention to the present inadequate representation of Labour in Parliament, and moved, "That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable and expedient that, in order to give constituencies a full and free choice in the selection of Parliamentary candidates, the charges now made by the returning officer to the candidates should be chargeable to public funds, and that all Members of the House of Commons should receive from the State a reasonable stipend during their Parliamentary life." He said that in all probability it would be pointed out that the Woolwich election had shown that there was no difficulty in returning a Labour Member. Here and there, no doubt, they found an incident of that character, but Labour candidates had very little opportunity in the constituencies at General Election times. At any rate, such an election should teach the House one lesson, viz., that workmen would rather be represented by those of their own class. He was speaking, of course, of purely industrial constituencies. He had never yet been able to make up his mind as to the position taken up by hon. Members in the House after their election speeches. There was a good deal of talk about there being absolute equality in this country, but there was, as every Member knew, only one way of getting into the House, and that was by spending substantial sums of money. A considerable sum of money was spent in securing his election, but he did not have to find a farthing of it. The cash was subscribed openly and freely. But he had often heard it asked when a poor man was standing, "Who is finding your money?" The British House of Commons boasted of its love for freedom and justice. Then let it give every man the opportunity of giving his brains and his work to the country by carrying into effect the Resolution he proposed, instead of putting all sorts of obstacles in the way of poor men.

They were told the other night that the great need of men in the Army was brains as well as muscle. If that were good enough for the Army it ought to be good enough for that House, which certainly stood in need of the best brains of the nation. There should therefore be no bar to constituencies commanding the services of the best brains. It was all very well to say that no man was likely to succeed in the House of Commons who had not first succeeded in the world—whether in trade or otherwise, but why should they wait until a man had worn himself out before sending him to Parliament? Only the other day he saw the following advertisement in the *Yorkshire Post*:—

> "M.P.—A gentleman, thirty, holding a responsible position in London, desirous of entering Parliament, wishes to meet with an affectionate and wealthy lady, view matrimony. Genuine. Highest credentials."

The highest credentials seemed to be that the applicant had the moral courage to advertise for someone who would find him the money to enter Parliament. The House should put its foot down on that sort of thing by leaving an absolutely free choice to the constituencies in the selection of their representatives. It might be suggested that men would go into the House of Commons simply to make a living out of it But was there not in the present House more than one Member who made a pretty good thing out of the privilege of being able to attach the magic letters "M.P." to his name? However that might be, he ventured to assert that the administrative capacity of this country had never yet been properly tapped. It was said a man needed to be trained for political life. Yes, but where? Was it at the University? Was it by taking a double first at Oxford or Cambridge that he would turn out a great lawmaker, or was it by constant contact with humanity? He had seen in the Press an observation to the effect that it was all very well for Labour to have its representatives in Parliament, but what did they know of those great historic and important questions which so vitally affected the interests and welfare of the nation. His answer to that was that it was infinitely more important to the average industrial worker of this country that the conditions of life should be bettered, and that an opportunity should be given for men to enter the House who knew what he wanted. There was a constituency, the name of which he was told was not on the map, but which sent a Member to the House—the Pudsey Division of Yorkshire—-

MR. GEORGE WHITELEY (Yorkshire, W.R., Pudsey): Oh, yes, it is on the map.

MR. CROOKS said he had been told in Yorkshire that Pudsey was not on the map. He was not personally responsible for the statement. The fact he wanted to bring out was that when an election was about to take place there, the working men selected a very good man as their candidate. They sent him to the returning officer to ask how much money it would cost to fight the election. He was told he would have to lay down £150, and at once replied, "I have only £100." The result was that because he had not sufficient money to pay the returning officer's fees the Labour candidate was unable to run on that occasion. In the case of another constituency a candidate was forced on it against the wishes of a large proportion of the voters, and when asked why he had come there, he replied, "Here I am, and you will have to take me whether you like it or not." It was something like compulsory vaccination. The nation had not a free choice of its representatives. When it came to selecting a representative of the people the choice should be as wide as possible. Apart from workmen there must be many business men who could ill afford to pay the election and out-of-pocket expenses of a Member of this House. If the nation wanted the best the nation ought to pay for it. He might be asked, Why should the nation pay when it got so much for nothing? Well, let people look at the condition of the finances and ask if they really got so very much for nothing. He was foolish enough to believe that the practical knowledge of working men would prove exceedingly helpful in the deliberations of the House. There were too many academically-trained men and too few practical men engaged in the Government of the country. If a dozen men were taken indiscriminately both from the workshops and the Universities and placed around a table to discuss a question, he undertook to say there would be more good sense supplied by the working men than by the University men. He had been in touch with working men for years and years; he had sat with them on administrative bodies and his experience was that one touch of nature was worth infinitely more than all the academic training Oxford or Cambridge could give. If the House would pass that Resolution, and if the Government would give it legislative force, they would never have cause to regret the wider and better selection of members which would follow forthwith.

MR. BROADHURST (Leicester), in seconding the Motion, said the subject of it had been discussed in that House many times. It embodied two essential points in connection with the freedom of choice in the selection of candidates for membership of the House of Commons. The first part of the Motion asked the House to declare that candidates for Parliamentary honours, like those for seats on county councils, town councils, and parochial bodies, should be relieved of official charges in connection with their election. These charges were the most difficult point which poor men had to contend with in their contests for a seat in the House of Commons, and he submitted that there was no reason whatever why they should be imposed on Parliamentary candidates any more than on candidates for seats on local governing bodies. As far back as 1883 he divided the House upon that question. Mr. Gladstone, in that year, was carrying through Parliament a Bill for the greater Prevention of Corrupt Practices at Parliamentary Elections, and that Act did very considerably reduce the channels of expenditure which had been open up to that date. While the Bill was in Committee he endeavoured to get inserted an Amendment charging the returning officers' expenses on public funds. In that proposal he had with him the sympathy of the House, and he hoped that the Motion now under debate would equally command the sympathy of hon. Members. Still it was not found possible thus to amend the law on that occasion. Mr. Gladstone, who was Prime Minister and Leader of the House, gave, however, an assurance of his deep sympathy with the object of the Amendment, and while pointing out that he could not accept it in a Corrupt Practices Bill, he promised to give favourable consideration to any Bill which might be brought in to accomplish the object it had in view. Consequently, in conjunction with the hon. Members for Morpeth and Poplar, he introduced a Bill, but, unfortunately, owing to the exigencies of Parliamentary procedure, he was never able to obtain an expression of the opinion of the House upon it in its concrete form.

In the constituency which he had the honour to represent, the official charges during the last three elections had amounted in the aggregate to £1,260. That had been divided between four candidates, and it would be seen that it was practically a prohibitive sum so far as poor men were concerned. In years past a suggestion was thrown out that the charge should be imposed on the local rates, but many objections were taken to that course. It was sufficient that night to say that they proposed to throw the charge on public funds. He had worked out how such a proposal would affect Leicester, and had found that it would represent a burden of not more than two-sevenths of a penny. But in addition to that he believed that if once the charge were imposed on some public fund the claims of the returning officers would immediately be reduced by more than one half, and many expenses which were now incurred would in future be absolutely avoided. He thought the proposal embodied in the Resolution was a very reasonable on. It was advanced in the interests of economy, and he had no doubt that it would be welcomed quite as much by middle class men as by working men. It would even benefit those who were better equipped with the world's wealth than were working men. The other point embodied in the Resolution was the question of the payment of Members. The arguments for and against that proposal were quite familiar to the House, because it had been discussed over and over again. He would like to point out that the new Rules of Procedure had enormously increased the difficulties which beset working men in entering Parliament, and he would gladly see made some adjustment of them which would facilitate Labour representation. At present the House sat until midnight, but nearly two hours were wasted in the middle of the evening. Would it not be better to continue work during those hours, and to rise at ten o'clock? Another point which seriously affected poor men was connected with the high rents of houses in London, and the difficulty of getting to and from home.

At present Members were kept in the House until midnight, and later, when all means of transit to the suburbs had ceased; many hon. Members were therefore compelled to live near Westminster or to travel long distances at night. He hoped the House would get an expression of opinion from the Government on this question; and that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be prepared to meet the demand they put forward, if not wholly at least partially. Having regard to the interest which the Chancellor of the Exchequer was evidently taking in the subject he would second the Motion with confidence.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable and expedient that, in order to give constituencies a full and free choice in the selection of Parliamentary candidates, the charges now made by the returning officer to the candidates should be chargeable to public funds, and that all Members of the House of Commons should receive from the State a reasonable stipend during their Parliamentary life."—(*Mr. Crooks.*)

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): There was one point in the excellent speech of my hon. friend the Member for Woolwich which I was sorry to hear from him. It was that part of the speech in which he let us know that he had received the impression that Members such as himself, who in a peculiar degree represent the working classes, were not received on all occasions, I will not say with respect, but with a feeling of courtesy and consideration by the House. I think that when my hon. friend has been a little longer among us he will be disabused entirely of that idea; because, in my experience, I have never seen an exhibition of such a spirit, and, speaking without regard to one side of the House or the other, I can say that there are no men who are listened to with greater patience and pleasure than those who speak as the representatives of Labour. What is the reason of what I should have called the exceptional interest which is taken in their speeches? It is not only that we are anxious to show our courtesy to them, but because they speak on subjects of which they have themselves a personal knowledge, and with an authority which is not possessed by other hon. Members.

This Motion is one which I shall support cordially. It is no stronger, and almost less peremptory, than the Motions of the same kind which we on this side of the House have supported before. It is not only a question of the numbers of those whom we call the working classes—by which we mean nothing but a compliment—

it is not only their numbers that necessitate some provision of the kind; but it is the fact that they have a distinct view of interest in public matters which is not sufficiently represented in the House. And if we are to have any regard whatever to the full development of the democratic system of Government—the system of Government which we profess to have established in this country—we surely ought not to allow any barrier of mere money to stand in the way of the fullest expression of the wishes and desires of the people. And this resolution goes beyond those who may be included in the ranks of labour, as it is commonly understood. There are many men in this House who are not well off, though not Labour Members, and there are many men out of the House who would be most useful to it, but who are debarred from coming in by the expense, not only of the election, but of the life which a Member of Parliament has to lead. Is it not desirable to remove these barriers altogether? As to the expenses of elections, would it not be desirable to have an inquiry into them, for they appear to grow instead of to diminish? Beyond that there is the expense of living in London, and the charge which is thrown on a man by taking him away from his ordinary habits, and these are all bars to the full and free choice in the selection of Parliamentary candidates. I am anxious to see our representative system made as complete as possible, and one of the most essential of all changes, with a view to that completeness of our system, is the removal of the barrier of money from those who are not only competent, but in some respects the most competent of all, to tell the House what is required to improve the position of the people.

*Earl PERCY (Kensington, S.) said that as one who had had some academic training, and who therefore fell under the condemnation of the hon. Member for Woolwich, he felt some diffidence in speaking on behalf of the Government. It was to be regretted that there was such a short time for the discussion of this important subject, but all must admit the wit and ability which the hon. Member for Woolwich had shown in moving his Resolution. This Motion was one of more importance than those which they were usually called upon to deal with on Tuesday evenings. It was important, not only in the sense that it would introduce constitutional changes into our system of representation as great as any changes that were likely to result from any measure brought forward on the responsibility of the Government, but also because it was a question which they had not had an opportunity of discussing for many years. If hon. Gentlemen were right in thinking that opinion in the constituencies had changed in recent years, then it might be desirable to come to a decision on the subject, since it was only when the Party now in office were in power that any opportunity at all was given for the discussion of the question. The Motion would at once afford instruction to their constituents and a subject of profitable discussion to themselves. He did not, of course, allude for a moment to the pecuniary aspect of the question, which would not weigh with any hon. Member, since the Motion was not retrospective. He alluded rather to the opportunity of self examination, of appraising at their proper value the arduous but hitherto unrewarded services which they had rendered to a fortunate country. In these days, when the doctrine of economy was being preached, no doubt it would be gratifying to them to tell their constituencies that the taxpayers of this country, so far from not getting proper value for their money, had for a long time past been living on unearned increment, to hold up to them the example of the model employer and to claim for themselves, as hard-working legislators, if not an eight hours day, at any rate a living wage. He was the last to deny that there was something to be said for this Motion. He observed that the right hon. Gentleman still retained this particular item in the programme of the Party opposite. He had been in some doubt whether it was a measure which had a permanent place in that programme or whether it was one of those ornaments which were thrown aside as flyblown phylacteries—one of those inconvenient accounts which were rubbed off the slate by the advocates of efficiency and economy. This Motion was based on the ground that at the present moment that House did not adequately represent the people. That was a statement in support of which no proof had been adduced and no definition had been given of what was meant by representation. It appeared to be assumed that the representation could not be regarded as adequate, unless there were a certain number of Labour Members in the House He was the last to deny that the presence of Labour Members in that House was desirable. He had been sufficiently long in the House to appreciate the popularity which the Labour Members had deservedly won; and they all welcomed gentlemen like the hon. Gentleman the Member for Woolwich in their midst. But they did not welcome them because they belonged to a particular class, or were rich or poor, any more than they welcomed the right hon. Gentleman because he was a baronet, or capitalists because they were capitalists. They welcomed them, so far as these considerations were concerned, on the negative ground that the nature of a man's employment, or the amount of his private means had nothing to do with his capacity to represent a constituency. But he did not admit that a member of the working class was any more representative of a constituency than any other Member of the House. Many of them represented constituencies almost entirely composed of members of the working class. If they were to admit that working-class Members of that House were representatives of their constituencies in any other sense than other Members were, they would have to admit that they represented, not the constituency as a whole, but a particular class or section of the constituency.

MR. CROOKS said that the point was that the choice of the constituency was limited.

*EARL PERCY said the hon. Gentleman defended his Motion on the ground that it would widen the area of selection. It was undoubtedly true that the Labour Members they welcomed to this House had, in the nature of things, had special opportunities of studying certain social conditions, and therefore brought special knowledge to bear upon social problems. There might be something to be said for the Resolution in so far as it tended to widen the area of selection for that particular class of expert. But, if the House were to adopt this new principle of paying for expert knowledge, why were they to limit its application to Labour Members? It was entirely erroneous to suppose that Labour was the only interest penalised. Many experts in every kind of profession, in business, at the Bar, and in scientific pursuits, were debarred from giving their services to the public in that House because they could not afford to give their time or forego their professional incomes. The proposals of the hon. Gentleman did not even guarantee that the workmen elected would have special knowledge of social questions; and if the principle of paying for expert knowledge were to be adopted, the money would be better spent, not in paying everyone whether they were worth it or not, but in paying a really adequate salary to men of eminence to induce them to forego lucrative work in their own particular walk of life, so as to secure their undivided attention and co-operation in Parliamentary councils. That was one argument against the hon. Gentleman's plan. Another was that his proposals did not tend, according to Colonial and American experience, to secure the object he had in view. A third argument was the financial one. These proposals would involve the country in a charge of £250,000 sterling at the least, and if they included municipal elections in an expenditure of £1,500,000. Could anyone say this expenditure was justifiable in existing circumstances? The taxpayers had the first claim. There were a number of problems awaiting solution on which the money might be better spent, such as poor-law reform, housing, education and licensing reform, every one of which would be thrown into the background if this Motion were accepted. He asked the House to reject the Motion on these grounds and because he believed it would seriously alter the character of representatives in the House of Commons, and inflict an irreparable blow on the public life and Parliamentary institutions of this country.

MR. CROOKS rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate resumed.

SIR WILLIAM TOMLINSON (Preston) said he believed that there was no country in the world in which there was such an amount of unpaid work done for the benefit of the community as in this country; and if they began to pay one particular branch of work, they would be opening the door to payment for all kinds of public service.

And, it being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed to-morrow.

IMPERIAL REVENUE (COLLECTION AND EXPENDITURE) (GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND).

Return ordered, "relating to Imperial Revenue (Collection and Expenditure) (Great Britain and Ireland) for the year ending the 31st day of March, 1903 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 285, of Session 1902)."—(*Mr. Joseph Albert Pease.*)

SALMON FISHERIES (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL).

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn

Adjourned at five minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 1st *April*, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS.

The Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of Ways and Means.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Bath Corporation Water Bill; Bridgwater Gas Bill; as amended, considered; to be read a third time.

Sutton District Water Bill; Walker and Wallsend Union Gas Bill. Reported with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table.

City and South London Railway Bill; Reported with Amendments. Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PETITIONS.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Penryn; Shrewsbury; and Great Yarmouth; to lie upon the Table.

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Banff; Peterhead; and Elgin; to lie upon the Table.

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

Petitions against: from Rawmarsh; and Shifnal; to lie upon the Table.

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.

Petitions against establishment: from Fraserburgh and Mid Calder; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.

Petitions against: from Peterborough; Bath; Worcester (two); Maidstone; Bridgwater; North Camberwell; Streatham; Wandsworth; Staines; Sheffield (two); Kentish Town; Torquay; Birmingham; Hednesford; Brentford; Bristol; Southampton; Nottingham; Woolwich: Plumstead; Manchester; Aldershot; Tunbridge Wells; and Tonbridge; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Birmingham and Swindon; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY IN MONMOUTHSHIRE.

Four Petitions from Ebbw Vale, for prohibition; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS (RENEWAL OF LICENCES).

Petition from Great Yarmouth, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

WINES IMPORTED.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 17th March; *Sir Thomas Dewar*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 100.]

GOVERNMENT INSURANCES AND ANNUITIES.

Account presented, of all moneys received and of the disposal thereof, and of all contracts for the grant of deferred life annuities and for payments on death made during the year 1902 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 101.]

RUSSIA (NEW GENERAL CUSTOMS TARIFF).

Copy presented, of translation of the New General Customs Tariff for the European frontiers of Russia, with comparison, as far as possible, of the rates of Customs Duty contained in the tariff with the rates at present in force on imports into European Russia from the United Kingdom [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

CHARITY COMMISSION (ENGLAND AND WALES).

Copy presented, of Fiftieth Report of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LEAD POISONING IN EARTHENWARE AND CHINA WORKS.

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 5th March; *Mr. Cochrane*]; to

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 102.]

CREMATION (ENGLAND AND WALES).

Copy presented, of Regulations made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department under Section 7 of the Cremation Act, 1902, with reference to the maintenance and inspection of crematoria, the condition under which cremations may take place, etc. [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

POLICE (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Forty-fifth Annual Report of His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland for the year ended 31st December, 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIA (LOANS RAISED IN ENGLAND).

Copy presented, of Return of all Loans raised in England, chargeable on the revenues of India, outstanding at the commencement of the half year ending on the 31st March, 1903 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 103.]

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS SECURITIES.

Return ordered, "of the amounts of British Government Securities held by the several Government Departments and other public offices on the 31st day of March, 1903, specifying whether held in England or Ireland" (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 192, of Session 1902) :—

£2¾ per Cent. Consols.	£2¾ per Cents. (1905).	£2½ per Cents.	Local Loans £3 per Cent. Stock.	£2¾ per Cent. Guaranteed Land Stock.	£2¾ per Cent. War Loan.	Other Securities.		
						Annuities for Terms of Years.	Exchequer Bonds and Treasury Bills.	Local Loans Bonds.

—(*Mr. Hayes Fisher.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Established Rank for Gun Wharf Employees.

MR. REGINALD LUCAS (Portsmouth): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can arrange for a proportion of the men employed in His Majesty's gun wharves being granted established rank, with pension, as in the case of His Majesty's dockyards.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) Pension rights have been granted to principal foremen and others of corresponding rank in all sections of the Ordnance Department at Home stations, and will shortly be granted to 85 per cent. of the foremen. As regards labourers and mechanics, it is considered better, in the interests of efficiency and economy, to pay such rates of wages as are found necessary to secure the services of good workmen, without pension.

Irish Gold Ornaments.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Wexford, N.): To ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he can state when the case for the recovery of the Irish gold ornaments will be tried.

(*Answered by Mr. A. J. Balfour.*) I understand that the case will be tried soon after Easter.

Cost of Army Depôts.

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): To ask the Secretary of State for War how many depôts, exclusive of Caterham, are now maintained for the Artillery, Cavalry, and Infantry, respectively; also what is the total cost per annum, and the estimated daily cost per recruit (excluding pay) of these depôts.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: To ask the Secretary of State for War what is the total cost per annum of the Caterham Depôt, and the estimated daily cost per recruit (excluding pay).

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) The figures are as follows:—

	Depôts.	
	Number.	Annual Cost.
		£
Cavalry - - -	1	34,000
Artillery- - -	15	178,000
Infantry (Line) -	68	476,000
Total -	84	£688,000
Foot Guards - -	1	£28,000

The estimated daily cost per recruit is, Cavalry 6s. 2d., Artillery 6s. 3d., Infantry (Line) 4s. 7d., and Foot Guards 2s. 10d. It should be remembered that the staff of a Line depôt is maintained to meet a number of contingencies beyond those of training recruits. The depôt superintends recruiting for the Army and the Militia, and has the charge of arms and clothing, including Militia clothing, during the non-training period, as well as of the stores of the depôt. No accurate comparison is therefore possible between the Line and Guards' depôt.

Irish National Education—Plans of New Schools.

MR. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can state when the proposed revision of plans and specifications for new schools under the Board of National Education is likely to be completed; and, in view of the fact that the building season has now commenced, whether steps will be taken to expedite the revision.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) At the request of my right hon. friend I will reply to this Question. The Committee appointed to consider the whole subject has recently presented its Report. Pending a final decision on the Report, the Commissioners will allow the building of schools in urgent cases to proceed under the old regulations and on the old plans, if the managers prefer this course to waiting for the revised rules and plans.

Law Officers' Fees.

MR. LAMBERT (Devonshire, South Molton): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will state the total amount, specifying contentious and non-contentious business, paid in fees to the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General during the past financial year.

(*Answered by Mr. Hayes Fisher.*) If the hon. Member desires information as to the financial year 1901-2, I must refer him to page 275 of the Appropriation Accounts for that year. As the financial year 1902-3 only ended a few hours ago I am not in a position at present to furnish corresponding figures in respect of it.

Frontier Medal for Troops engaged in the Mekran and Perso-Beluchistan Expedition.

SIR SEYMOUR KING (Hull, Central): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether the Government are now prepared to consider favourably the claim of the troops employed in the Mekran and Perso-Beluchistan operations of 1901–2, extending over five months from the capture of Fort Nadiz, to the Frontier medal.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) I fully recognise the good work done by the troops and the excellent spirit shown by them throughout the operations, but I regret that I am unable to regard the military aspect of the operations as of sufficient importance to justify the grant of a medal.

Telegraphic Facilities in County Cavan.

MR. McGOVERN (Cavan, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been directed to the inconvenience caused to the people of Gowna and that district in the county of Cavan owing to the want of telegraphic communication; and whether, seeing that Arvagh is the nearest telegraph office, six miles from Gowna, will he consider the advisability of establishing telephonic communication with Arvagh.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) The question of an extension of the telegraph to Gowna is under inquiry, and I will communicate with the hon. Member on the subject.

Education Act.

MR. HUMPHREYS-OWEN (Montgomeryshire): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether, in making interim orders under Section 11, Sub-section (5), of the Education Act, 1902, the Board will follow the procedure laid down by Sub-section (3) of that Clause for making final orders.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) In making interim orders under Section 11 (5) it will not be possible, and does not appear to the Board desirable, to follow the procedure prescribed by Section 11 (3) for making final orders. Interim orders must in many cases be made at short notice in order to enable schools to comply on the appointed day with the conditions as to management which the Act prescribes. The procedure of Section 11 (3) is not suitable for this purpose. No questions which could arise in connection with the final order are in any way prejudiced by the interim order.

Report of Corruption at Shrewsbury.

MR. HUMPHREYS-OWEN: To ask Mr. Attorney-General when the Report of the Commissioner on the recent cases of alleged corruption in a municipal election in the borough of Shrewsbury will be distributed to hon. Members.

(*Answered by Sir Robert Finlay.*) The Report will be laid and distributed as soon as possible.

Irish Land Bill—Sales on the Cusack Estate.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the proposals in the new Land Bill to secure the reversion of untenanted lands to descendants of former owners, the Government will take steps to prevent sales of large blocks of the Cusack (County Longford) Estate to individuals who propose to deal in these lands subsequently as owners in fee; and whether he will so arrange the date in the Bill as to prevent such transactions.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) I cannot introduce legislation to prohibit sales under the existing law. Under the Bill advances for the purchase of holdings the tenancies in which were created since the 1st March, are limited to £500 with a power, in exceptional cases, to extend that limit to £1,000.

Release of John Mulligan.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether a memorial has been received from the district councillors and magistrates of Mohill Union for the release of John Mulligan, at present a prisoner in Sligo Gaol; and, if so, will he state what steps he proposes to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The memorial does not appear to have been yet received. When received it will be submitted to the Lord Lieutenant, with whom rests the exercise of the prerogative of mercy.

Delay in Erection of Labourers' Cottages in County Limerick.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will say what is the cause of delay in the carrying out of the scheme of labourers' cottages in the Newcastle West Union, in the county of Limerick.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The documents connected with this scheme were not received by the Local Government Board in a complete form until the 13th ultimo. The Board then fixed the 21st April for the holding of the local inquiry, but the District Council has requested that it should be postponed for three weeks from that date.

Royal Engineers—Compulsory Vaccination of Civil Staff.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether members of the Royal Engineers Civil Staff (temporary) are compelled to be vaccinated; and, if so, will he explain why they are debarred from the Conscience Clause of the Vaccination Act.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) Will the hon. Member kindly refer to my reply to a Question put on this subject by the hon. Member for the Rugby Division of Warwickshire on the 26th ultimo, to which I have nothing to add.†

MR. RUNCIMAN (Dewsbury): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether members of the civil staff of the Royal Engineers are allowed the privilege extended to other persons under the Vaccination Act, 1899, of exemption from vaccination, provided they satisfy a bench of magistrates of their conscientious objection; and, if not, will he explain why.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) Will the hon. Member kindly refer to my reply to a Question put on this subject by the hon. Member for the Rugby Division of Warwickshire on the 26th ultimo, to which I have nothing to add.†

Military Drill in Schools.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is by his instructions that the officers commanding military districts have recently been writing to the head masters of elementary and secondary schools, urging the advantages of early military training on the youth of England; and by what authority these officers make inquiries and request particulars as to the present arrangements for drill of the schools.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) In accordance with the proposals made by the Incorporated Association of Head Masters, with a view to the encouragement of military drill in secondary schools, a circular letter was sent out to the districts, directing the officers commanding the regimental districts to assist in carrying out the wishes of head masters, and to forward them a copy of the circular letter. The arrangements are entirely voluntary on the part of the head masters, and our position is only one of willing assistance if such is requested.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Army Standards.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE (Bristol, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what are the standards of height, weight, and chest measurement for Infantry of the Line, and when were these standards laid down.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Lord STANLEY, Lancashire, Westhoughton): The respective standards are laid down in the instructions issued with Army Orders, January, 1903. These standards practically came into force in April, 1902, but were not confirmed until the end of the year. They are too lengthy to read out in detail, but I have forwarded a copy to the hon. Member.

The Late Sir Hector Macdonald.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, Chelmsford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he can state why the despatch of 25th March from Sir West Ridgway was allowed to be made public, and who was responsible for its publication.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): No, Sir. The Question should have been addressed to me, not to the Secretary of State for India, and I think it has been given notice of under some misapprehension, because, so far as I know, there has been no despatch written by or received from Sir West Ridgway on the subject in question. No such despatch has been published, and I think the hon. and gallant Gentleman must be referring to a report which I myself saw in *The Times* of an answer given by Sir West Ridgway to a question addressed to him by an independent member of the Ceylon Legislative Council. The proceedings of the Legislative Council are published, and it is open to anyone to telegraph such an answer; but no despatch of any sort on the subject has been received.

MAJOR RASCH: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman does he approve of the implied condemnation of a man before he has been heard?

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† See page 297.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: Perhaps I may be allowed to reply to this as it is a personal question. There was no implied condemnation. The statement was that some very serious charge had been made, but the hope was expressed, which I am sure was shared by everybody, that the charge would be disproved.

Income Tax.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that income tax is levied, both in Australia and in England, on residents in England whose income is derived from purely Australian sources; and whether, in view of the rate of income tax in some of the Australian States, in considering any scheme for the reduction of income tax, he will take into consideration the claim for remission on the part of those who have to pay a double tax on the same source of income.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): I am aware of the facts referred to by the hon. Member, but I am afraid I cannot hold out any hope of compliance with the suggestion his Question contains.

Crime and Cremation.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the case of one Severino Klosowski, who was convicted on the 19th March of murder by poisoning, in connection with whose trial two bodies had been exhumed after burial for some years, in respect of which grave suspicion attached to the prisoner of similar poisoning; and whether, having regard to such cases, he will take steps to secure that any rules and regulations issued under Section 7 of the Cremation Act, 1902, provide against cremation being used to destroy evidence of crime.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. AKERS DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): I have prepared regulations under Section 7 of the Cremation Act, 1902, based on the recommendations of a Committee which I appointed to advise me on the subject. The Report of that Committee, which has been presented to Parliament, shows that the chief point to which they directed their attention was the necessity of providing, so far as possible, against cremation being used to destroy evidence of crime. It is, of course, impossible to have an absolute safeguard under any system; but I am confident that if the bodies to which the Question refers had been presented for cremation under the proposed regulations, the inquiries to be made would have been much more searching than any required under the present system of certification before burial; and they might have led to the immediate detection of crime. The regulations will lie on the Table for forty days before coming into force.

Whitaker Wright—Extradition Proceedings.

MR. LAMBERT (Devonshire, South Molton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can give any information as to when the extradition proceedings in connection with Mr. Whitaker Wright are likely to end.

*MR. AKERS DOUGLAS: No, Sir. The matter now rests entirely with the American Courts.

Compulsory Overtime in the Central Telegraph Office.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that on Wednesday 25th March telegraphists at the Central Office, London, were compelled to stay on overtime at very short notice owing to the pressure of telegraphic messages on the occasion of the introduction of the Irish Land Bill; and whether he will explain the delay in notification, in view of his desire that the staff should be informed at the earliest moment of any interruption of their normal duties.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, Worcestershire, E.): The hon. Member is right in saying that it is my desire that the telegraph staff should be informed at the earliest possible moment of any interruption of their normal duties, but unfortunately it is not always possible to give long notice. On the occasion in question it was only on the day itself that the advices of press work became so numerous as to show that the provision which had been made would be insufficient, and there was then no alternative but to retain additional force on short notice. I am considering whether it is possible to obtain in advance the names of volunteers for such work on all similar occasions in future.

Education Schemes.

MR. JOHN ELLIS: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether he will give a Return giving the following particulars with respect to schemes submitted to and approved by the Department under Section 17 of the Education Act, 1902: as to each case, the name of Council submitting the same; number of the Members of Council and the proposed Education Committee, and how many of these are to be appointed from the Council and from outside; and, in that case, whether on the nomination or recommendation of other bodies, and, if so, what bodies; and how many women.

*THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Sir WILLIAM ANSON, Oxford University): The Board are preparing a Return which will be issued, if possible, every month, showing the number of schemes approved by the Board and the composition of the Committees to be established under those schemes.

MR. JOHN ELLIS: Then may we when we re-assemble after Easter expect a Return to the end of March?

SIR WILLIAM ANSON: I hope so.

Scottish Education General Aid Grant.

MR. BUCHANAN (Perthshire, E.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the General Aid Grant in the Scottish Education Vote represents the half of the equivalent grant for Scotland due under the English Education Act; and, if so, for what purposes and under what conditions it is to be distributed; and in what way will the other half of the equivalent grant to Scotland be paid.

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): The General Aid Grant in the Scottish Education Vote represents one half of the total additional grant to Scotland made in view of the additional grant to England under the Education Act of last session. It will supplement the Imperial contribution to educational expenditure. Its distribution will be settled by Minute which will be laid before Parliament as soon as certain inquiries as to the best methods of distribution have been completed. The distribution of the full Annual Grant, whether on the lines of that Minute or otherwise, will be matter of future consideration.

Irish Land Purchase.

MR. GEORGE FABER (York): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state in how many cases resort has been had to legal process for the recovery by the State of purchase instalments due by tenants under the Land Purchase Acts; and what proportion the cases in which legal process has been so employed represent of the total number of purchase instalments paid.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): On the 1st November last the total amount receivable under the Purchase Acts of 1885 and 1888 in respect of half-yearly instalments of annuities then due was £192,088, by 25,270 payers. Of this amount £183,937 had been paid on 30th March, 1903, by 24,279 payers, leaving £8,284 due by 991 payers. Under the Acts of 1891 and 1896 the amount of the instalments receivable on the 1st November last, from 40,160 payers was £237,633. Of this £232,552 had been paid on the 30th ultimo, leaving £5,081 due by 606 payers. The Commissioners are now proceeding, by Civil Bill, for the recovery of instalments so in arrear. As in former years, it may be taken for granted that the arrears will rapidly be recovered. The holdings of fifty-nine purchasers, in default in payment of their instalments were advertised for sale during the last twelve months. In forty-seven of such cases the sales were withdrawn, the arrears due, together with costs, having been paid. In eleven cases the holdings were sold to ordinary purchasers subject to the future payment of the existing annuities, all arrears of instalments due, and costs, having been realised at such sales. In one case there was no bidding at the sale, and the Commissioners have taken possession of the holding pending re-sale. In one other case, the result of previous proceedings, the holding is still in the Commissioners' hands for re-sale.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Two out of 80,000 cases?

MR. WYNDHAM: Yes, that represents the irrecoverable debt.

Rural Libraries in Ireland.

MR. BOLAND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will grant the Return referring to rural libraries in Ireland which is on this day's Paper.†

MR. WYNDHAM: The Act has been adopted in nine rural districts, the names of which I have communicated to the hon. Member. It does not appear that a rate has yet been levied in any of these districts for the purposes of the Act. A Parliamentary Paper containing this information seems hardly necessary.

Irish Equivalent Grant.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state upon what principle has the amount of the Irish equivalent grant of £180,000 been calculated.

MR. WYNDHAM: The amount of the new aid grant for England for the current financial year is estimated at £1,352,000. The amount allocated to Ireland as an equivalent grant, namely, £185,000 (not £180,000) is the proportion of the English grant corresponding to the ratio of the population of Ireland to that of England according to the last census.

Irish Judiciary.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the fact that the county court judges in Ireland have no employment for more than half of each year, he will consider the expediency of making some arrangement which will prevent the necessity of filling up the vacant county court judgeship of Mayo.

MR. WYNDHAM: The number of recorders and county court judges in Ireland has been reduced to twenty-one in the manner provided by the 85th Section of the County Officers and Courts Act, 1877. The Executive, therefore, has no power, without legislation, to make arrangements such as suggested.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will give a Return stating in the case of each county court judge in Ireland the number of days on which he sat for the transaction of the business of his court during the year ending the 31st December, 1902, and also stating the amount paid to each such judge for salary and expenses.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN: I beg also to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will give a Return stating in the case of each judge of the High Court of Justice and of the Court of Appeal in Ireland, the number of days on which he sat for the transaction of the business of his court during the year ending the 31st of December, 1902, and also stating the amount paid to each such judge for salary and expenses.

MR. WYNDHAM: I am not aware of any precedent for a Return of the character indicated in these Questions. I will consider, however, whether a Return on the subject is practicable. The salaries and allowances paid to judges of the superior and county courts are charged on the Consolidated Fund; detailed information in respect of these payments will be found in the Finance Accounts of the United Kingdom (House of Commons Paper, No. 234, of the Session of 1902). The reduction of £250,000 a year to which I have referred can be achieved without reducing the judiciary.

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† The Return was as follows: Return showing the District Councils which have adopted the Rural Libraries Act, stating the amount of the rate levied by each Council and the sum which such rate will produce in each instance.

Capitation Grants for Irish Evening Schools.

MR. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the rule for excluding days in national schools when the average is less than one-third of the monthly average, owing to exceptional causes, applies to evening schools as well as to day schools.

MR. WYNDHAM: The payments of the capitation grant to evening schools are based on actual average attendances. The rule in question does not apply to these schools.

Limerick Telegraphists' Grievances.

MR. JOYCE (Limerick): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he has received an appeal from certain telegraphists at Limerick, against the refusal of the Department to grant them the dual increment for postal knowledge on the ground that they were appointed at amalgamated offices; and whether, seeing that in instances of a similar character the increment has been granted, he will consider the advisability of acceding to this appeal.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I am making enquiry and will inform the hon. Member of the result.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. LAMBERT: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury when the Budget will be introduced and the Second Reading of the Irish Land Bill taken.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I expect that my right hon. friend will introduce the Budget on the first Thursday after the reassembling of the House. As to the Second Reading of the Irish Land Bill, I desire to take it at the earliest opportunity; and, though I do not name a day, I hope that neither the House nor Irish Members will think that if I take it immediately after the Budget, at the beginning of the next week, if I can secure that date, I am taking too early an opportunity for proceeding with the measure.

HALL-MARKING OF FOREIGN PLATE BILL.

Order for Second Reading upon Friday, read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

Second Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

MUNICIPAL TRADING.

Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Question [4th March], "That it is expedient that a Select Committee of this House be appointed to join with a Committee of the Lords to consider and report as to the principles which should govern powers given by Bills and Provisional Orders to municipal and other local authorities for industrial enterprise within or without the area of their jurisdiction."—(*Mr. Balfour.*)

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

*MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) said he was reluctant to occupy the time of the House in discussing this question, but on two previous occasions he had been prevented submitting the reasons why, in his opinion, this Motion ought not to be adopted until satisfactory arguments on its behalf had been adduced either by the Prime Minister or by the President of the Local Government Board. The inquiry which the House was being asked to sanction into municipal administration would be costly. Its object was to discredit municipal enterprise, and in his opinion it was utterly unnecessary; while it would be needlessly restrictive of recent developments of that civic local government which was not only the envy of other nations, but which also frequently formed a theme for statesmen at Guildhall banquets and similar festivities. The Motion invoked the aid of Parliament for purely local matters over which the ratepayers ought surely to have the first and final voice, and if it were carried its effect would inevitably be to curtail the present form of municipal activity, the benefits of which were evident to all who took an interest in the wonderful improvement of our towns and cities—an improvement which could only have been brought about by that municipal activity which the Motion sought to condemn. It would cause, too, a diminution of that civic work of social amelioration which municipalities had been undertaking, and the time of Parliament, which should be given to national and Imperial problems, would be wasted on purely local matters of a most microscopical character. What was the reason alleged for the Motion? No public scandals had been urged by those who supported it outside the House, there had been no judicial rebuke of either municipal councillors or public bodies as to the way in which they carried out their work, and most significantly there had been no discontent expressed by the ratepayers themselves as to the way in which the local authorities had performed their duties. There was, too, no suggestion from the Private Bill Committees or the Committee of Referees, or, indeed, from any of the authorities of the two Houses which dealt with bills promoted by municipal authorities, of any scandal. There was no suggestion that the municipal authorities had neglected their work or been guilty of jobbery or corruption, or, indeed, of any dereliction of civic duty, and, so far as he could see, the only objection to municipal industrial enterprise emanated from a few belated individuals who were under the impression that municipal bodies were looking out for fresh fields to conquer and were deliberately and wantonly intruding themselves into commercial and industrial spheres in order to compete, in a harassing and irritating way, with private enterprise which they alleged was capable of doing that particular class of work better. That was not the case. There had not yet been an instance of so-called municipal enterprise undertaken by a local authority that had not been imposed upon it either by the vote of the citizens or by the necessities of public health or municipal development, and in carrying out those mandates they had kept within the four corners of their statutory duty.

It might be said by some—"Look at the way in which rates are rising." [An HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear.] The hon. Member who cheered must be aware that rates were not rising because of the extension of municipal enterprise in commercial or industrial spheres. Those enterprises were of a reproductive character, and instead of making a loss to the ratepayers they were frequently the means by which services were improved and cheapened and at the same time the ratepayers' burdens were reduced. He was inclined to think that these objections were due to the green-eyed monster, to the prevalence of a growing jealousy on the part of inefficient capitalists and unsuccessful manufacturers who were incapable of doing for the public as well and as cheaply what public officials had proved their capacity to do well. He, for one, declined to admit that the growth of local rates was due to the cause assigned. He denied that municipal indebtedness was due to the causes alleged, because on examination of the facts and figures—which the Motion sought to traverse—it would be seen that the very reverse was the case. The debts of the municipal authorities of this country now amounted to £300,000,000 sterling; of that one half was due to non-productive works such as drainage, roads, bridges, and cemeteries, as well as education. None of these were expected to be remunerative from a cash point of view, but still they were undertaken in the general interests of the community. But what about the other moiety of the municipal indebtedness? If hon. Members would only take the trouble to look at the Return issued at the request of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton two years ago, and at certain Board of Trade and Local Government Board Returns, they would soon be convinced of the fact that the whole of the cry about municipal indebtedness and trading, in so far as it was due to the institution of such undertakings as gas works, tramways, water works, and electric lighting, instead of being a burden on the ratepayers was a source of positive advantage to the community and to the nation. He would like to direct the attention of the Prime Minister to the fact that in one branch of municipal activity alone—the manufacture of gas—251 local authorities up to August, 1902, made their own gas at a cheaper price and of better quality than had been done by private enterprise, and had cleared a net profit of £414,000, which had gone in reduction of the rates. Again, 118 local authorities had worked their own tramways instead of remitting them to private enterprise, and last year they made a net profit of £1,861,418. Another Return, which dealt with £121,000,000 worth of invested capital for both non-productive and remunerative works showed a clear profit of £400,000, and a still further Return, asked for by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton, who was under the impression that municipalities were going farther than they should, dealt with £88,000,000 of capital invested by municipal authorities, and showed a net profit of £3,613,668, which was devoted either to improvement of the services or to a reduction of the rates. Contrast these services and assets of municipal activity and indebtedness with the non-reproductive National Debt of £800,000,000, for which there was nothing but war, death, disease, and international rancour.

It was clear, then, that municipal activity in the provision of gas, electric light, motor trams, harbour docks, etc., instead of being a disadvantage to the community was a boon to everybody. But somehow or another certain people were not content with that excellent record of splendid work performed by able, devoted, and disinterested men of all sections of society, principally conducted by captains of industry who, having made their fortunes by private enterprise, were imbued by public spirit and civic duty, now in the evening of their lives devoting their business capacity, commercial honour and intelligence to these works. Surely they could safely leave it to public-spirited ratepayers to say whether they were prepared to vote the money necessary for that activity, knowing that the community would receive the profits. He would respectfully ask the Prime Minister, who had no love for the Clergy Discipline Bill, not to make a second mistake by introducing a Municipal Discipline Bill, which would make the House of Commons responsible for every peddling parochial question, and cause it to send down some centralised bureaucrat to supervise works which could, after all, only be profitably carried out by the authorities concerned, and by the ratepayers interested. He would also appeal to the Prime Minister not to assume the *rôle* of a political King Canute and to assert that the waves of municipal progress must go back. This inquiry would not only be restrictive in its operation, inquisitorial in its character, and calculated to obstruct reforms of a very desirable character, but it would impose a limit upon certain works contemplated or already being undertaken. What could the inquiry do? It could only produce the Report to which he had referred; it could only call town clerks, engineers, surveyors, to London day after day, causing them to neglect their duties at the expense of the ratepayers and to the great inconvenience of the public interest for purposes which were really unnecessary. Why should the inquiry be instituted? Surely there was already sufficient check upon these public bodies. He would appeal to the late President of the Local Government Board, who would, forty or fifty years hence, deserve the hearty thanks of every lover of the country for the excellent work he did in passing the Local Government Act of 1888, which had done more to remove poverty from, and diminish crime in, large communities than any other Act passed this century. If this Committee were allowed to do its work in the spirit which characterised the Resolution he could only say that the work of the right hon. Gentleman would be counteracted and kept in check. How unnecessary it was after all. These bodies were already kept well in check by the Local Government Board, with its manifold arrangements for auditing accounts, and why, then, should they enter on a long-winded inquiry into matters which did not concern the House of Commons?

Let the House consider seriously what it was doing. We had extended our Empire in South Africa on the broad ground of conferring equal rights on all white men. We went there to establish a franchise—social, communal and individual. We went there to extend the principles of civilisation and the glories of British freedom and local self-government, even at the point of the bayonet, at great cost of life and limb, and at an enormous sacrifice of public money. And yet here, in the very heart of the Empire itself, there was a contrary view in operation—a tendency, instigated by papers like *The Times*, which could wax eloquent over Jameson raiders but could not be eloquent about people living in the slums of Liverpool and London, to put a stop to that municipal enterprise, the profits of which enabled the authorities to build better houses for the poor, and lift the common people from the abyss of poverty in which too many lived. Surely all this was contradictory, inconsistent and illogical. There was nothing more creditable to the British race as a people than the wonderful growth of that communal spirit of municipal activity, and the way in which men of all classes had yoked themselves to the chariot of the community, and in so doing had raised municipal government to a point which no other country could vie with or compare with. Why was the brake to be applied at the instigation of *The Times*, of the British Electric Traction Company, and of a number of gentlemen, mostly of Eastern origin, who were issuing pamphlets and writing letters about things they did not understand and could not justify? Why should foreign capitalists secure profits out of public services which ought to be devoted to the improvement of the dwellings of the poor, and the provision of parks and free libraries, instead of being devoted as they would be in private hands to the growth of a luxurious class who were becoming a menace to civilisation? Charity began at home, and he ventured to assert that local government could only be satisfactorily conducted by local authorities. Wherever Parliament interfered needlessly with the affairs of localities it did harm. It was because he regarded the proposal as an inspired attempt on the part of monopolies and private enterprises, inefficient, grasping, and greedy, to take to themselves what municipalities now spread over communities, that he appealed to the Prime Minister not to press the Motion, but to let the communities of this country go on developing as they had done for the last thirty or forty years, rapidly improving the condition of the people, and thereby exercising a healthy influence upon both our local and our national life, making the nation a model and exemplar to every foreign country.

*MR. COHEN (Islington, E.) said he had listened to the speech of the hon. Member for Battersea with the same amazement and surprise that he always listened to speeches of men who were advocates of municipal trading. The Motion on the Paper did not dogmatise about municipal trading at all. His hon. friend always told them they were confident the result of investigation would be to prove the purity of municipal administration. If they were so confident, why did they so strongly oppose an inquiry? Their course had always taken the form of stopping it by blocking the Motion or by talking it out. That was the policy of the hon. Member for South Islington.

*SIR ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.): I should be glad if my hon. friend can tell me when I opposed or blocked or obstructed in any way this, or any similar, or, indeed, any Motion. On the contrary, I said I had no objection to it, though I deemed it quite unnecessary.

MR. COHEN: I have not the dates here, nor do I know if my hon. friend is the Member who blocked the Motion.

SIR ALBERT ROLLIT: You said so.

*MR. COHEN: I do not think I did. But I do recollect that when the Motion was last down for consideration my hon. friend made one of his most interesting speeches just before half-past seven, and that stopped the Motion being carried that day.

*SIR ALBERT ROLLIT: I spoke between six and seven, and for only a very few moments. I distinctly said I would not oppose, much less obstruct, in any way the passing of the Resolution.

MR. JOHN BURNS: May I take on my shoulders the responsibility which the hon. Member is seeking to impose on the hon. Member for South Islington? I talked the Motion out.

*MR. COHEN accepted the explanation and apologised to the hon. Member for South Islington. But he again asked why, if they were sure that inquiry would result in a complete vindication of the municipalities, did they prevent one taking place? He did not object, and he never had objected, to municipal trading as such. Very often what was called municipal trading was not only useful but necessary, but where municipal trading was unnecessary, experience had shown that it was not only not useful but mischievous, and inevitably costly. At any rate, investigation and inquiry would establish the truth one way or the other. Before a municipality undertook any work it should be shown that the service was necessary for the general requirements of the population, and that it could not be successfully and economically provided by private enterprise. If it could be economically and effectively carried out by private enterprise, then there was every argument against its being undertaken by the municipality, for it was bad for municipalities to have the control and administration of larger sums of public money than were absolutely required for the necessities of the public service. He was in no way reflecting on the purity and integrity of municipal bodies. He had the honour of serving on the London County Council for twelve years, and there was no one in that House or out of it who was more firmly convinced of the integrity of that body as it had existed ever since it was instituted. There should not be any temptation to exercise electioneering influence in the public service. There must be a large amount of work to be done by the municipalities of large towns, although he did not think that every municipality would always rise to the almost unattainable standard of the London County Council. He wished to take care that the services for municipalities should be confined to those matters which had not already been taken up by private enterprise. The returns which had been quoted by the hon. Member for Battersea were unreliable because they did not take a proper businesslike and audited account of wear and tear and depreciation for the gradual wearing out of tackle and machinery. The London County Council had issued return after return showing what they were pleased to call a profit, resulting from the undertakings of their works department. That was not a profit in any sense of the word. It might be something below the estimate given by the man who was going to carry out the work. In such a case a man had only got to estimate the cost somewhat high in order to bring out the actual charge somewhat low, and that was called the profit.

MR. JOHN BURNS: No, no!

*MR. COHEN said he did not think the hon. Member for Battersea could contradict that assertion.

MR. JOHN BURNS: But I do.

*MR. COHEN said that it was only by throwing open the work to public competition that they could find out what was going to be the lowest price, and it was by that means that they could get at the legitimate cost of the work. That procedure had never been resorted to by the London County Council because they had made their own estimates.

MR. JOHN BURNS: No, no!

*MR. COHEN said the only fair way in giving an estimate was that the cost of any excess in the price should fall upon the man who made the tender. What he had stated was an absolute fact within his own experience of the last eight years of the London County Council. Their work was never submitted to public tender, and the profit or loss which had been claimed was never ascertained by any such infallible test.

MR. JOHN BURNS said he was sorry to interrupt the hon. Member, but out of regard for the admitted facts he was compelled to say that what the hon. Member was now saying was a complete travesty of the conditions under which the London County Council carried out public work.

*MR. COHEN said he was sorry to hear his statement called a travesty, but he again asserted that the computation of profit and loss in the work of the London County Council had been tested only as compared with the architect who framed the original estimate. This question had never been tested ever since the institution of the works department by the competition of public tender, and he again repeated deliberately upon this question what he had said before in regard to the way the profit and loss had been computed. He wished to have this inquiry constituted in a manner which would largely inspire confidence. Local debts were increasing and the rates were advancing, and those facts could not be contradicted. They wanted an inquiry to see how far an investigation could connect those results with the causes in order that Parliament might make some sort of limit confining the powers of municipalities to services which they could economically and usefully carry out, leaving private interprise to deal with other matters.

MR. WHITLEY (Halifax) said his objection to this Resolution was that its wording would be an Instruction to the Committee in a certain direction.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): No.

MR. WHITLEY said he would remind the Prime Minister and the House of a recent piece of history in regard to municipal activity—he referred to the development within the last ten years of electric traction. When he was a local councillor he was interested in the development of a system of tramways in a town which had never had tramways of any kind, and he found that the Standing Orders of this House practically made it impossible for that municipality to work its own tramways; those Standing Orders had actually to be suspended time after time, and were eventually altered to keep abreast with a modern invention, which had so greatly added to the mechanical possibilities in the way of traction. The Prime Minister had referred to the question of traction as in his opinion the greatest hope of the present time in dealing with the housing question. Within the last ten years this House had had to admit that it made a mistake in adopting Standing Orders appointing Committees in this way. The Huddersfield Bill was recommitted for that very reason, but they went on from that to running tramways outside the borough boundary, and they were empowered to buy land if they considered that was the best solution. All this was done by a Conservative Government, because they saw it was necessary in order to find any solution of the housing question. This was an illustration of the undesirability of this House trying to confine its powers in that direction.

What he wanted to ask the Prime Minister was whether he would not allow an Amendment to his Resolution which would constitute this Committee for a positive instead of a negative purpose. He thought the Instructions should not be to consider within what limits the powers should be defined but to discriminate between those powers which could be given generally to all local authorities, and those other powers which ought only to be given in the case of a special sanction by this House. There was a very distinct line between those powers, and he believed that a Joint Committee appointed by both Houses for a positive purpose of that kind might do a very great work for municipal development, and it might be the means of saving an infinite amount of money. Small local authorities had to come year after year for powers which were invariably granted by the Committees upstairs, and yet those authorities were put to a great deal of trouble and expense in obtaining those powers. He referred to such powers as those dealing with infectious diseases and administrative powers which now had to be obtained by private Bills in this House. Within the last ten years there had grown up a vast field for legislation by Private Bill Committees, which might well be referred by a general Act to some other body in order to save the trouble and expense of those authorities coming to this House for those powers. There were, on the other hand, special powers which ought only to be granted in the case of proved special requirements. If this Committee was instructed to inquire into that question and to report which powers ought to be conferred by a general Act as proper subjects for municipal administration, and which ought to be reserved for the special approval of the House, that would produce a very useful result indeed. The Prime Minister had brought in within the last few days a Bill to regulate the employment of young children, and it was a very excellent Bill as far as it went. Did the Prime Minister know the history of that Bill? It was the city of Liverpool, which, through its municipal powers, applied for legislation for the protection of young children.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is straying somewhat from the question raised by this Motion, which does not relate to all the powers of municipal bodies, but only to those connected with industrial enterprises.

MR. WHITLEY said that perhaps he would have put himself in order had he submitted his point at an earlier part of his speech. He had an Amendment to move which would not take away any single power proposed by the Prime Minister's Resolution. He proposed to leave out the words "for industrial enterprise" and to add at the end of the Resolution the words, "and which of such powers should be conferred by a general Local Government Act."

*MR. SPEAKER: I do not think that would be in order, because there is a specific question raised here relating to municipal trading. The hon. Member is seeking to convert the inquiry into one as to powers in regard to sanitary and other matters which may be granted to corporations, but which have nothing to do with industrial enterprise. The Amendment is not a modification of the Resolution. It is a complete change of subject.

*MR. WHITLEY said he was quite aware there might be some difficulty on the point of order. He asked whether it would be possible to propose an Amendment which did not cancel anything in the original proposal, but did extend the terms of the reference. On that point he submitted that any Committee which had to deal with municipal powers would find that there was no precise definition of what was and what was not "industrial enterprise," and that they themselves would find it impossible to draw a hard and fast line. He submitted that it would not be outside the intention of the Resolution as moved by the Prime Minister that the Amendment he suggested should be moved.

*MR. SPEAKER: I have no doubt that if the Resolution is passed in its present form the Committee will have no difficulty in excluding a great many of the matters the hon. Member is seeking to include. They must draw the line. All I can say is that I do not think it is in order to extend the Resolution in the way the hon. Member desires by leaving out these words.

MR. WHITLEY said he took it that the ruling would refer to the omission of the words for "industrial enterprise," but not to the addition of the words at the end—

> "And which of such powers should be conferred by a general Local Government Act."

*MR. SPEAKER: I have only said that an Amendment cannot be admitted which would extend the power of the Committee to go beyond the limit of industrial enterprise.

MR. WHITLEY said it would be sufficient for his purpose to move the addition of the words he proposed. The addition of these words would have the effect of turning the inquiry which was to be held from a purely negative and destructive one into a positive and constructive one. It would lead the Committee's attention to the question what powers ought to be conferred by a general Act, and what powers ought to be reserved to be considered under the special circumstances of each occasion by this House. He hoped the Prime Minister would give consideration to this matter and would be in a position to accept the Amendment, which, while it would not exclude a general inquiry into powers for municipal enterprise, still would convert the inquiry into an open and impartial one into the powers which should be conferred on municipalities, and which would save a great deal of Private Bill legislation in this House. Surely it was a proper thing for a legislative chamber like this to discriminate between the two kinds of Powers—on the one hand those which ought to be conferred freely and liberally without expense to the various boroughs under a general local government scheme, and, on the other hand, those Powers which ought to be conferred in special cases, on special cause shown, when Private Bills were brought before the House. He begged to move the addition of the words—

> "And which of such powers should be conferred by a general Local Government Act."

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, Cleveland) seconded the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"At the end of the Question, to add the words 'and which of such powers should be conferred by a general Local Government Act.'"—(*Mr. Whitley.*)

Question proposed—"That those words be there added."

Mr. GALLOWAY (Manchester, S W.) said he did not quite see what was the object of the hon. Member in moving the Amendment. It appeared to him that the terms of the reference did not preclude the Committee from recommending that a general Act should be passed regulating the whole of municipal enterprise. As he understood the Amendment, the hon. Gentleman suggested that there should be an Act laying down what general powers municipalities should be allowed to exercise with regard to municipal trading without coming to this House.

*Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): Does the hon. Member say "regulate?"

Mr. GALLOWAY said he would not insist on the word "regulate" if the right hon. Baronet quarrelled with it. The hon. Member for Halifax now suggested that municipalities should be allowed to carry on this enterprise without coming to Parliament at all. He was glad that he had stated the fact. Where the unfortunate ratepayers would be with such an Act he trembled to contemplate. The position of the ratepayers was serious enough as it was, but if Parliament was to have no control whatever over this enterprise, then, indeed, the position would be a grave one. The hon. Gentleman had not gone so far as to suggest what were the kinds of enterprise which municipalities might be allowed to carry on without the sanction of Parliament. There might be some difficulty in defining the words "industrial enterprise," but he took it that there was a great difference between those enterprises which would be carried on by local bodies for the benefit of the whole community and those which were only of benefit to a section of the community. The hon. Member would not deny that a municipality ought to come to Parliament for powers if it proposed to lay down a system of electric traction at very great cost to the ratepayers. If there was a large sum of the ratepayers' money to be invested by a municipality, at least Parliament ought to see that proper protection was given to the ratepayers, some of whom—it might be only a minority—strongly objected to this enterprise. Some of them might have serious doubts, as he had, as to whether municipalities were the best parties to carry out electrical traction. Did the hon. Member suggest that there should be an Act passed giving general powers to all municipalities to carry out this electric enterprise without coming to Parliament for powers? In the larger corporations there were men of experience who could deal with such matters, but surely the hon. Gentleman did not suggest that the smaller corporations should receive the same powers in a general Act. He had difficulty in ascertaining the particular powers the hon. Gentleman wished the Committee to recommend, for this was almost an instruction to the Committee. If he did not mean such enterprise as electric traction, what did he mean? The question of gas was one with which they should be allowed to deal.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: I suggest municipal opera houses.

Mr. GALLOWAY said that the hon. Member for Battersea had filled in a gap which the mover of the Amendment did not specify and did not bargain for. Ardently as he desired that we should have musical opera houses—(laughter)—he used the term "musical" advisedly, because musical and municipal opera houses might mean totally different things—he had never suggested, and he did not think the hon. Member for Battersea would suggest, that the municipalities should be given a general power to spend the ratepayers' money in establishing opera houses, good, bad, or indifferent. He submitted that the Amendment of the hon. Member was totally unnecessary. If the Committee came to the conclusion that it was advisable that some such general Act should be passed as the hon. Member seemed to think was necessary, then they had it in their power to recommend it. But if this Committee was to work well—as he thought it would—and if it was to be useful in showing the defects as well as the benefits of municipal enterprise, and how Parliament should deal with the questions that had arisen in giving those powers in the future, then he contended that the Amendment was quite unnecessary.

Sir EDWARD GREY (Northumberland, Berwick) said he believed that the hon. Member had correctly interpreted the Amendment of his hon. friend. It was in the nature of an instruction to the Committee, and he thought it was an instruction that was very much needed, because the apprehension of some on his side of the House was that, looking to the origin of this Committee, it would be regarded as a Committee the object of which was to set limits to and restrictions on municipal enterprise. The reason for this Committee being proposed was the tendency there had been for municipal enterprise to extend in various departments. Municipalities had been becoming pioneers in industrial enterprise, because they were seeking to solve some of the problems of social reform; and it was because they were pioneers in this direction that this Committee was to be appointed. He ventured to say that, if a Committee was appointed which prescribed to Parliament that it should set limits to municipal enterprise, the limits which were accepted and agreed on to-day would not be accepted in the future. His hon. friend's Amendment, as he understood it, would be really an instruction to the Committee not to restrict, not to set up limits, but to consider within what limits Parliament might safely part with its control over municipal enterprise and set municipalities free, within certain limits, from existing restrictions. That, he thought, would be a very valuable instruction. He thought an attempt to lay down general restrictive limits was bound to be futile, but if the Committee was able to direct its attention to considering within what limits municipal enterprise might be set free, they might make a valuable report. He quite agreed that industrial enterprises by muncipalities should be well conducted. By all means let the ratepayers know what was being done by the municipalities, and let accounts be properly kept; but those were details. This Resolution was seeking to deal with a matter of principle. He felt very strongly that the solution of these problems must come from the action of local government, and the question was, "Are you going to encourage or to discourage the exercise of these powers?" He quite agreed that these powers should be regulated, watched and co-ordinated, provided the exercise of them was not discouraged. Therefore he would suggest that if these problems in our big towns were to be solved it would not be by the action of Parliament, which had no time to attend to them, but the solution must come from the ratepayers. The ratepayers must learn to control the action of their own municipalities with a proper sense of responsibility. Because he saw no other way of meeting the great problems in our towns—the housing problem, for instance, which he thought was admitted on both sides of the House to be a very urgent one—except by setting free municipal enterprise, he should certainly oppose the Resolution for the Committee unless it had some instruction in it which would make it clear that its object was not restrictive, but rather to ascertain within what limits municipalities might be set free from Parliamentary control.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I was unfortunately unable to be present during the debate which occurred on the previous occasion when this Motion was discussed, but I confess that, so far as a portion of this debate is concerned, I have heard what has fallen from various speakers with surprise. The critics of the Motion appear to assume that the intention and object of having this inquiry is to restrict municipal trading, and the framers of the Amendment desire that the Committee should have a direct instruction to relax the limits of municipal enterprise. There is, no doubt, a difference between a Committee which is appointed to obstruct or limit enterprise and a Committee which is directed to encourage enterprise. But this is an inquiry with no colour one way or the other. It is merely intended to acquaint the House with the facts of the case and not to carry out the policy either of those who look with suspicion on the extension of municipal industry or of those who wish to remove such limits as exist and to see that enterprise extended without any bounds. It appears to me that what we want is an impartial inquiry; and I will ask the House whether there is not really a case made out for it. To begin with, it is a very strong order, when a Committee has been appointed by this House and has sat during one session, to refuse the reappointment of that Committee when it is asked for.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.): It was not appointed last year.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: We had no time. We have time, I am glad to say, this year. The House did not refuse to appoint the Committee last year; and I do not know of any case in which, when the House has been asked to reappoint a Committee and when the Committee seeks reappointment, the House has refused to take that course. And is there any justification for this very startling innovation in our Parliamentary practice? There has been a great change for good or for evil—I am disposed to think for good—in the last fifteen or twenty years. Duties have been thrown on municipalities which in old days they never dreamed of undertaking. They have become, not merely the owners of vast waterworks, not merely great manufacturers of gas and great owners of tramways, but most of our municipalities now are employers of labour on a very large scale. That may be good or it may be bad, but it is a very interesting and important development in modern social life; and I think it is absurd that when an inquiry is demanded by a large section of opinion in the country that inquiry should be refused. I have said that, on the whole, I do not look with any great fear on the development of municipal industrial enterprise. Indeed, it is perfectly plain if you are to describe the housing problem as an industrial problem—and it certainly has an industrial side—that that can only be solved by the municipalities. It cannot even be attempted by this House. All this House can do is to give the municipalities general directions and the necessary powers; and the failure, in so far as it is a failure, in our efforts to deal with this great social problem is not that this House has been chary in giving those powers, but that municipalities have not used them to the utmost advantage. Therefore I look to the municipalities to help us in this matter. I am the last person, therefore, to wish to set any undue limits to the efforts of those bodies.

I entirely agree with what has fallen from an hon. Member opposite who is the most ardent opponent of this Motion, the hon. Member for Battersea. He asks "Is there any general charge of corruption against the municipalities?" As far as my knowledge goes, there is no such general charge. There may have been here and there cases in which, not corruption, but something approaching corruption, has been charged against this officer or that officer; but considering the enormous number of transactions in which these corporations are engaged, and considering the multitude of individuals who have the opportunity of being corrupted, I should not venture to say that there was absolute purity from top to bottom in every case and through all time. I think we may justly pride ourselves on the fact that, broadly speaking, municipal enterprise has not been corrupt. But again I ask, is that a reason for not having an inquiry? This is not an inquiry into corruption. It is an inquiry into what is a new and very important and interesting development of municipal life, on which every one must admit that we do require further light to be thrown. Broadly speaking, I do not look with any great alarm on this movement; but there are certain aspects of it on which I should like, for many reasons, to have some further illumination thrown. I should like each individual Member of the House to ask himself this question, among others — Can we view with absolute serenity an indefinite increase in the position of the municipality as an employer of labour among its own constituents? I no not feel absolutely sure of that. I know something about the phenomenon as it affects this House. I know that there are no questions more perplexing and more dangerous than those which arise when Members are returned to this House by constituents who are paid by the State. I know that

that is a danger here, and it is a danger which makes me look with great suspicion and dislike on any very large extension of employment by the community as a whole. What is a danger in this House I am convinced may be a danger to municipal bodies, and they may be tempted by the pressure of their own constituents to a course of action which may not be wholly for the common good. That is one danger which, I think, ought not to be ignored by any man who looks at the question in the sober light of dry reason.

There is another question which I often ask myself. So long as the municipalities are dealing with water supply, or paving of streets, and so on, it is not probable that the progress of invention and knowledge will render antiquated and useless the works upon which they have gone to great expenditure. Take the case of Manchester, which, by the expenditure of millions to supply itself and its neighbours with water, went direct to the Cumberland lakes. I do not suppose, however rapidly science may progress, that it will render that expenditure useless or unremunerative. But can anyone feel the same kind of certainty when you leave road-paving and water supply and come to such matters even as gas supply, in which, I admit, municipalities have been conspicuously successful? Can anybody say with certainty that gas, even in the near future, will retain its place as a source of light and heat and power? I am not sure of it. When I come to such things as tramway expenditure my doubts increase. With the great changes that are now going on in road locomotion, who will say that a fixed line of tramway, embarrassing as it is to every other form of street locomotion, is to be the permanent form, and the form in which you can best get improved transit from one part of a great city to another, still less from the centre to the outskirts? Speaking, therefore, as a ratepayer as well as a Member of this House, whose duty it is to watch the development of matters municipal in this country, I do not look with absolute confidence upon the future of these enormous commercial undertakings in which the municipalities have engaged. If you leave these matters to private enterprise and inventions render antiquated the works upon which vast capital has been expended by a private company, what happens? The company becomes bankrupt or winds up its affairs, and a new and improved system takes the place of the old system. But supposing a municipality has embarked an enormous amount of the ratepayers' capital in improved transit, such as an overhead electrical system, or let it be granted that the municipality may have spent its money wisely at the time on whatever may be considered the most advanced form of electrical transit—then suppose that a method far better and cheaper is invented, how painful would be the dilemma of these authorities! Are they to confess that they have wasted millions of the ratepayers' money in the past, and are they to reconstruct their works? Or are they to saddle their municipalities for all time with methods and inventions which are old-fashioned and worn out?

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: They would be paid for out of the sinking fund.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If your sinking fund was sufficiently large that would be a good answer; but is it sufficiently large? Would not an inquiry into that very point be useful? To my own knowledge the tramway methods of twenty years ago are absolutely antiquated now, and even those of ten years ago. Are the tramways of to day to be antiquated in ten years, and, if so, is the sinking fund sufficiently large to meet the loss? There is one other point which has often interested me personally and may perhaps interest the House. I have often asked myself—not merely with reference to these great municipal undertakings, but with reference to our great railways and those enterprises which are not municipal, but which are on a scale with which only municipalities can compete—whether their manufacturing enterprise—whether for instance the manufacture of engines by a railway company—is good for the progress of invention. Most inventions are carried through after all by the individual trader for his own profit. If you look at the history of invention you will find that some person or some firm engaged in a particular trade, and having a private interest in making the public buy their manufactures and preventing customers from taking those of their rivals, from time to time put an enormous premium upon improvements of their products; and that is greatly to the advantage of invention. I doubt whether there will be much invention when everything is municipalised. I fear we shall see the same kind of stagnation as takes place in enterprises where there is no competition. The House may take that for what it is worth. It is a speculation which has very much interested me, on which I should like to see a light shed by further inquiry, and on which I do not for one moment pretend to have made up my own mind. I have put before the House some considerations which I am certain are worthy of careful inquiry. I am also certain that impartial inquiry, with no prejudice against municipalities, and no prejudice in favour of them, will help us. The only desire I have in asking this House to do what it has always done—namely, to re-appoint a committee which desires to be re-appointed—is not to crush out municipalisation of trade, not to foster municipal trade, but to obtain information on a most important and difficult aspect of modern social development which may enable us to make up our minds on the questions which come before us.

One hon. Gentleman says that this is not a question for the House of Commons, but for municipalities; but that is not so. This House has to decide these questions, or a great many of them. My right hon. friend the President of the Board of Trade, in his remarks the other night pointed out that his Department was in the habit of refusing an application for Provisional Orders to allow municipalities to manufacture electrical fittings. Is that right or wrong? I do not know. But I hope I shall know when this Committee has investigated this matter, and I think it is a matter which should be investigated. One of the most important developments of municipal activity is the extension of that activity to regions outside the area of the municipality. Nobody would say that that is an affair for a municipality alone. It may be an affair for a municipality and its neighbours. That, again, is a subject on which, I think, the House requires more illumination. I should be disposed to think, speaking with imperfect knowledge, that there ought to be very great extension of these trespassing actions on the part of certain municipalities. For instance, I cannot doubt that, if there were great centres of power, it would lead to enormous economy in manufacture if that power could be conveyed from one locality, with almost insensible loss, to far distant regions. That, again, is a question which deserves consideration, and that consideration might be in favour of the extension of municipal enterprise. Surely we can be allowed to learn something about it? Again, the question of tramway extension from a great manufacturing centre into other municipal areas also requires consideration on general principle; and the House requires that general principles should be laid down on all these subjects of most pressing interest. Surely, the friends of municipal enterprise are showing an extraordinary doubt of their own case, and an extraordinary suspicion of the value of the principle which in this House they are so loud to proclaim, when they say that a joint Committee of the two Houses ought not to be allowed to deal with this matter. I am sure that hon. Members will see that the interests of truth—whether that truth be on the side of further extension of municipal trading or on the side of its restriction, or, as I think extremely likely, it be in favour of more extension in some directions and more restriction in others—must be served by inquiry. Whatever be the result, let us have an impartial inquiry, which will enable us to collect the teachings of experience to guide us in our individual and in our collective and representative capacity in dealing with these questions as they arise.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 103; Noes, 178. (Division List, No. 50.)

AYES.

Allen, Chas. P. (*Glos., Stroud*)
Ambrose, Robert
Asher, Alexander
Bayley, Thomas (*Derbyshire*)
Blake, Edward
Boland, John
Brigg, John
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burns, John
Burt, Thomas
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Robert
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Cawley, Frederick
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*
Crombie, John William

Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M. Vaughan (*Cardigan*
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Doogan, P. C.
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, John Edward
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (*Leith*
Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
Gilhooly, James
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Grey, Rt. Hn. Sir E. (*Berwick*
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Hayter, Rt Hon Sir Arthur D.
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hope John Deans (*Fife, West*
Horniman, Frederick John
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk.
Jacoby, James Alfred
Jones, Wm. (*Carnarvonshire*)
Joyce, Michael
Lambert, George
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leigh, Sir Joseph
Leng, Sir John
Levy, Maurice
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
MacDonnell, Dr. Mark A.
M'Govern, T.
M'Killop, W. (*Sligo, North*)
Mansfield, Horace Rendall
Markham, Arthur Basil
Mooney, John J.
Murphy, John
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nolan, Col. John P. (*Galway N.*
O'Connor, T. P. (*Liverpool*)
O'Doherty, William
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly, J. (*Roscommon, N.*)
O'Mara, James
Palmer, Sir C. M. (*Durham*)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Priestley, Arthur
Rea, Russell
Redmond, Jn. E. (*Waterford*)
Reid, Sir R. T. (*Dumfries*)
Rickett, J. Compton
Robertson, Edmund (*Dundee*)
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Runciman, Walter
Samuel, Herbt. L. (*Cleveland*)
Samuel, S. M. (*Whitechapel*)
Schwann, Charles E.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles E. (*Stafford*)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Spencer, Rt. Hn. C, R (*Northants*
Strachey, Sir Edward
Sullivan, Donal
Taylor, Theo. C. (*Radcliffe*)
Tennant, Harold John
Thomas, Sir A. (*Glam., E.*)
Thomas, David A. (*Merthyr*)
Thomas, F. Freeman (*Hastings*
Thomas, J. A. (*Glam., Gower*)
Thomson, F. W. (*York, W. R.*)
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Warner, Thos. Courtenay T.
Wason, J. Cathcart (*Orkney*)
Weir, James Galloway
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Whiteley, G. (*York, W. R.*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Williams, O. (*Merioneth*)
Wilson, F. W. (*Norfolk, Mid*)
Wilson, John (*Durham, Mid*)
Wilson, J. W. (*Worcestersh, N*
Woodhouse, Sir J T (*Huddersf'd*

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
Mr. Herbert Gladstone
and Mr. Causton.

NOES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Aird, Sir John
Allhusen, Aug. Henry Eden
Allsopp, Hon. George
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Arrol, Sir William
Atkinson, Right Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Austin, Sir John
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Bailey, James (*Walworth*)
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Alfred
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Man'r*
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (*Hornsey*
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (*Leeds*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Bathurst, Hon. Allen Benj.
Bhownaggree, Sir M. M.
Bignold, Arthur
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith
Bowles, Lt.-Col. H. F. (*Middx.*
Bowles, T. G. (*Lynn Regis*)
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Bull, William James
Campbell, Rt Hn J A (*Glasg.*)
Campbell, J. H. M. (*Dublin Univ*
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Cavendish, R. F. (*N. Lancs.*)
Cavendish, V C W (*Derbysh.*)
Chamberlain, Rt Hon J (*Birm*
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Chapman, Edward
Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Cox, Irwin Edwd. Bainbridge
Craig, Charles Curtis (*Antrim, S*
Cranborne, Viscount
Cross, H. Shepherd (*Bolton*)
Crossley, Sir Savile
Cubitt, Hon. Henry
Dalkeith, Earl of
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Davenport, William Bromley-
Dickinson, Robert Edmond
Dickson, Charles Scott
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dorington, Rt. Hon. Sir J. E.
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir Wm. Theodore
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Hart
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Faber, George Denison (*York*)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Ed.
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
Fitzroy, Hon. Edw. Algernon
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S. W.*
Fyler, John Arthur
Galloway, William Johnson
Gardner, Ernest
Garfit, William
Gibbs, Hn. Vicary (*St. Albans*
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (*Elgin & Nrn*
Gore, Hn G R. C. Ormsby- (*Salop*
Gore, Hn. S. F. Ormsby- (*Linc*
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
Hain, Edward
Hamilton, Rt Hn Ld. G. (*Midx*
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heath, Arthur H. (*Hanley*)
Heath, James (*Staffs., N. W.*)
Heaton, John Henniker
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hobhouse, Rt Hn H. (*Som'rs't, E*
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry
Hoult, Joseph
Howard, J. (*Midd., Tott'ham*
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Jeffreys, Rt. Hn. Arthur Fred
Johnstone, Heywood
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*
Lawson, John Grant
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Llewellyn, Evan Henry
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Chas. W. (*Evesham*
Long, Rt. Hn. W. (*Bristol, S.*
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*
M'Killop, Jas. (*Stirlingshire*)
Majendie, James A. H.
Manners, Lord Cecil
Maxwell, W. J. H. (*Dumfriessh.*
Melville, Beresford Valentine
Middlemore, Jn. Throgmorton
Mitchell, William (*Burnley*)
Morrell, George Herbert
Morrison, James Archibald
Mount, William Arthur
Muntz, Sir Philip A.
Murray, Rt Hn A. Graham (*Bute*
Newdegate, Francis A. N.

Nicol, Donald Ninian
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Peel, Hn. Wm. R. Wellesley
Percy, Earl
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Purvis, Robert
Pym, C. Guy
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Rattigan, Sir William Henry
Ridley, Hn. M. W. (*Stalybridge*
Ridley, S. F. (*Bethnal Green*)
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Russell, T. W.
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Saunderson, Rt. Hn. Col. E. J.
Scott, Sir S. (*Marylebone, W.*)
Seely, Maj. J. E. B. (*Isle of Wight*
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (*Renfrew*
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Sinclair, Louis (*Romford*)
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, H. C. (*North'mb. Tyneside*
Smith, Jas. Parker (*Lanarks.*)
Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (*Strand*)
Spencer, Sir E. (*W. Bromwich*)
Stanley, Edw. Jas. (*Somerset*)
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stewart, Sir M. J. M'Taggart
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Jn. M.
Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier
Taylor, Austin (*East Toxteth*)
Tollemache, Henry James
Tritton, Charles Ernest
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Vincent, Sir Edgar (*Exeter*)
Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir W. H.
Welby, Lt.-Col. A. C. E. (*Taunton*
Whiteley, H. (*Ashton-u.-Lyne*)
Williams, Colonel R. (*Dorset*)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson-Todd, W. H. (*Yorks.*)
Wodehouse, Rt Hn. E. R. (*Bath*)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart
Wrightson, Sir Thomas
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

Main Question put.

The House divided: Ayes, 187; Noes, 107. (Division List, No. 51.)

AYES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Aird, Sir John
Allhusen, Aug. Henry Eden
Allsopp, Hon. George
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Arrol, Sir William
Atkinson, Right Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Austin, Sir John
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Bailey, James (*Walworth*)
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Alfred
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Man'r*
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (*Hornsey*
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (*Leeds*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Bathurst, Hon. Allen Benj.
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bhownaggree, Sir M. M.
Bignold, Arthur
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith
Bowles, Lt.-Col. H. F. (*Middlesex*
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Bull, William James
Campbell, Rt Hn J A (*Glasg.*)
Campbell, J. H. M. (*Dublin Univ.*
Cavendish, R. F. (*N. Lancs.*)
Cavendish, V C W (*Derbysh.*)
Chamberlain, Rt Hon J (*Birm*
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Chapman, Edward
Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Colston, Chas. Edw H. Athole
Cox, Irwin Edwd. Bainbridge
Craig, Charles Curtis (*Antrim, S*
Cranborne, Viscount
Cross, H. Shepherd (*Bolton*)
Crossley, Sir Savile
Cubitt, Hon. Henry
Dalkeith, Earl of
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Davenport, William Bromley
Dickinson, Robert Edmond
Dickson, Charles Scott
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir Wm. Theodore
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Hart
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Faber, George Denison (*York*)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Ed.
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
Fitzroy, Hon. Edw. Algernon
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S. W.*
Fyler, John Arthur
Galloway, William Johnson
Gardner, Ernest
Garfit, William
Gibbs, Hn. Vicary (*St. Albans*
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (*Elgin & Nrn*
Gore, Hn G R. C. Ormsby- (*Salop*)
Gore, Hn. S. F. Ormsby- (*Linc*
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Groves, James Grimble
Hain, Edward
Hamilton, Rt Hn Ld. G. (*Mdx*
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heath, Arthur H. (*Hanley*)
Heath, James (*Staffs., N. W.*)
Heaton, John Henniker
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hobhouse, Rt Hn. H (*Somerset, E*
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry
Hoult, Joseph
Howard, J. (*Midd., Tott'ham*
Hozier, Hon. Jas. Henry Cecil
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Jeffreys, Rt. Hn. Arthur Fred
Johnstone, Heywood
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir J. H.
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*
Kimber, Henry
Lambton, Hon. Fredk. Wm.
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*)
Lawson, John Grant
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Llewellyn, Evan Henry
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Chas. W. (*Evesham*
Long, Rt. Hn. W. (*Bristol, S.*
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*
M'Killop, Jas. (*Stirlingshire*)
Majendie, James A. H.
Manners, Lord Cecil
Maxwell, W J H (*Dumfriesshire*
Melville, Beresford Valentine
Middlemore, Jn. Throgmorton
Mitchell, William (*Burnley*)
Morrell, George Herbert
Morrison, James Archibald
Mount, William Arthur
Muntz, Sir Philip A.
Murray, Rt Hn A. Graham (*Bute*
Newdegate, Francis A. N.
Nicol, Donald Ninian
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Peel, Hn. Wm. R. Wellesley
Percy, Earl
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Purvis, Robert
Pym, C. Guy
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Rattigan, Sir William Henry
Renshaw, Sir Charles Bine

Ridley, Hn. M. W. (*Stalybridge*)
Ridley, S. F. (*Bethnal Green*)
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Saunderson, Rt. Hn. Col. E. J.
Scott, Sir S. (*Marylebone, W.*)
Seely, Maj. J. E. B. (*Isle of Wight*
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (*Renfrew*)
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Sinclair, Louis (*Romford*)
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, H. C (*North'mb. Tyneside*
Smith, Jas. Parker (*Lanarks.*)
Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (*Strand*)
Spencer, Sir E. (*W. Bromwich*)
Stanley, Edw. Jas. (*Somerset*)
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stewart, Sir M. J. M'Taggart
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Jn. M.
Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (*Oxf'd Univ*
Taylor, Austin (*East Toxteth*)
Tollemache, Henry James
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. E. M.
Tritton, Charles Ernest
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Vincent, Sir Edgar (*Exeter*)
Walrond, Rt. Hn. Sir William H
Welby, Lt.-Col. A C E (*Taunton*
Wharton, Rt. Hon. J. Lloyd
Whiteley, H (*Ashton-und-Lyne*
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Williams, Colonel R. (*Dorset*)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, J. W. (*Worcestersh. N.*
Wilson-Todd, W. H. (*Yorks.*)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn E. R. (*Bath*
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wrightson, Sir Thomas
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Allen, Chas. P. (*Glos., Stroud*)
Ambrose, Robert
Asher, Alexander
Bayley, Thomas (*Derbyshire*)
Blake, Edward
Brigg, John
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland
Burns, John
Burt, Thomas
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Robert
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*)
Crombie, John William
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M. Vaughan (*Cardigan*
Devlin, Chas. Ramsay (*Galway*)
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Doogan, P. C.
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, John Edward
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (*Leith*
Gilhooly, James
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Grey, Rt. Hn. Sir E. (*Berwick*
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-
Hayter, Rt Hon Sir Arthur D.
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hope John Deans (*Fife, West*
Horniman, Frederick John
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk.
Jacoby, James Alfred
Jones, Wm. (*Carnarvonshire*)
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Lambert, George
Law, H. Alex. (*Donegal, W.*)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leese, Sir Jos. F. (*Accrington*)
Leigh, Sir Joseph
Leng, Sir John
Levy, Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
MacDonnell, Dr. Mark A.
M'Govern, T.
M'Killop, W. (*Sligo, North*)
Mansfield, Horace Rendall
Markham, Arthur Basil
Mooney, John J.
Murphy, John
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nolan, Col. John P. (*Galway, N.*
O'Brien, Patrick (*Kilkenny*)
O'Connor, T. P. (*Liverpool*)
O'Doherty, William
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly, J. (*Roscommon, N.*)
O'Mara, James
Palmer, Sir C. M. (*Durham*)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Priestley, Arthur
Rea, Russell
Reddy, M.
Redmond, Jn. E. (*Waterford*)
Reid, Sir R. Threshie (*Dumfries*)
Rickett, J. Compton
Robertson, Edmund (*Dundee*)
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbt. L. (*Cleveland*)
Samuel, S. M. (*Whitechapel*)
Schwann, Charles E.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles E. (*Stafford*)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Spencer, Rt Hn. C. R (*Northants*
Strachey, Sir Edward
Taylor, Theo. C. (*Radcliffe*)
Tennant, Harold John
Thomas, Sir A. (*Glam., E.*)
Thomas, David A. (*Merthyr*)
Thomas, F. Freeman (*Hastings*
Thomas, J. A. (*Glam., Gower*)
Thomson, F. W. (*York, W. R.*)
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Warner, Thos. Courtenay T.
Wason, J. Cathcart (*Orkney*)
Weir, James Galloway
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Whiteley, G. (*York, W. R.*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Williams, O. (*Merioneth*)
Wilson, F. W. (*Norfolk, Mid*)
Wilson, John (*Durham, Mid*)
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Herbert Gladstone and Mr. Causton.

Resolved, That it is expedient that a Select Committee of this House be appointed to join with a Committee of the Lords to consider and report as to the principles which should govern powers given by Bills and Provisional Orders to municipal and other local authorities for industrial enterprise within or without the area of their jurisdiction.

Message to the Lords to communicate this Resolution, and desire their concurrence.—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

IRELAND DEVELOPMENT GRANT [CONSOLIDATED FUND].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of the Consolidated Fund, of an annual sum not exceeding

£185,000 for providing a special grant to be used for the purposes of the Development of Ireland."

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): The Resolution just read from the Chair invites the Committee to say that it is expedient to institute an annual grant to Ireland of £185,000, charged on the Consolidated Fund. That grant will be devoted to certain purposes, the full nature of which will be explained when the Bill following upon the Resolution is brought in. But the proposals of the Government contain certain features which we admit to be novel, and which we believe to be important; I therefore feel it only due to the Committee to explain the nature of these novelties, and the reasons which have led to their adoption. This sum of £185,000 will be devoted to three purposes. In the first place, as I explained on introducing the Land Bill, the grant will be a guarantee against all contingencies of loss attaching to the flotation of stock issued in order to raise cash for land purchase in Ireland. I spoke at some length on this point last week, and I do not think I need repeat what I then said. During four years there will certainly be a charge of £50,000 a year, and there will be a charge of £20,000 a year in respect of the Congested Districts Board, leaving a sum of £115,000 a year. We may therefore, say, in view of the losses due to floating stock at a discount, that there will at once be available from this grant a sum of nearly £100,000 a year, and that in four years' time there will be available a sum of about £150,000 a year. The second purpose for which this project is mooted is to have a fund from which the educational demands of Ireland can be met. Last year the House authorised the expenditure of nearly £1,400,000 a year for the purposes of education in England. We hold that this grant is the due set-off to that, and that it belongs to Ireland in equity really quite as much as the Irish Church Surplus Fund belonged to Ireland. In the third place this grant can be used for the promotion of economic development and of transit facilities in Ireland. May I say to hon. Members who have not addressed themselves very closely to this question that we hold that the system of equal individual taxation throughout the whole of the United Kingdom must be maintained? But when, that being the case, a large sum is allocated to an exclusively English purpose, it has always been the practice of the House of Commons, for which there are several precedents in recent years, to allocate an equivalent grant to Ireland and Scotland. Parliament has recognised the obvious truth that equality of individual taxation does not by any means secure equality of fiscal treatment unless some regard be paid to the objects to which the sums raised by taxation are devoted.

I now come to the first novelty in the proposal of this year. On other similar occasions, in 1889 and 1890, I think, the equivalent grant to Ireland and to Scotland was calculated upon the proportion of taxation coming from Ireland or Scotland to the common Exchequer. That leads to results which all must hold to be illogical, and results which everybody in Ireland holds to be unjust; because the greater the increase of the taxation the less is the proportion that comes from Ireland, the poorest partner in the business, and so the less is her equivalent grant. As the evil increases the remedy diminishes, and you have only to force up taxation to a sufficiently high point to extinguish the remedy altogether, or to give it in what may be called homœopathic doses. Therefore we make this new departure. We say that the set-off to Ireland shall be calculated not upon the quota coming from Ireland as compared with the quota coming from England towards common purposes but shall be calculated on the populations of the two countries as revealed by the last census. Grave objections have been taken in this House by many economists, and notably by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, to laying down a rule that an equivalent grant was always to be given in one country for precisely the same purposes to which the money had been devoted in the other countries. You cannot force what is sometimes called the doctrine of *cy-près* very far in this connection. It by no means follows that because a purpose in England is important, urgent, and matured, and can be dealt with, that exactly that same purpose, or a purpose as like to it as can be found, is at the same moment of time equally important, urgent, and ripe for treatment in Ireland. What has been done in the past has been really to offer Ireland the option of voting money on the Estimates for a certain purpose, if she could devote money to that purpose with any profitable result. Take for example the subject of technical instruction. I would ask the Committee to consider how different were the conditions in Ireland and England at the time this House determined to render large sums available for technical instruction. England had an established system of local Government. Ireland had then no such system and did not obtain popularly-elected bodies till some years later. In Ireland, again, the number of towns is small, and their poverty relatively to English towns is very great. What is the result? In the nine years in the case of England between 1892 and 1900, sums amounting to £6,276,404 were devoted to technical instruction in England and Wales. Ireland lost two years altogether in that period; but in the remaining seven years she was only able to spend £71,900 on technical instruction, and out of that comparatively insignificant sum no less than £55,000 was expended in the last year. Ireland did not exactly lose her equivalent grant in that period, but the money had to be dashed down on some ill-considered project or lost altogether. At that time £78,000 a year was devoted to increasing the salaries and pensions of the national teachers in Ireland and the balance was devoted to intermediate education—if it could be earned, on the results in examinations forming part of the grammar-school curriculum. Money has been lavished on intermediate education in Ireland, and those who have had charge of it have most patriotically and without reward devoted themselves to turning it to the best account. But how can such expenditure be turned to good account when elementary education is not levelled up to the necessary standard, when only 55 per cent. of the children attend school at all, and when continuation schools do not exist? Money devoted to intermediate education in such circumstances is money thrown away; and then it is made a reproach that the cost of education in Ireland and the results obtained are not adequate. On the plan of putting money on the Estimates to be dashed down or lost there is no possibility of efficient or economic administration. It must not be supposed that I am blind to the services of those in charge of education in Ireland. The national teachers of Ireland have nobly sacrificed many of the ambitions of manhood in order to provide opportunities to others to win prizes which they deny themselves the opportunity of seeking. But it would be better in the interests of Ireland that this grant should not be flung down before any attempt has been made to correlate education in Ireland. The money would be wasted if Ireland were bound to spend forthwith what she could on education and leave the balance. So that while this grant of £185,000 a year is to be an indemnity to the Treasury against future demands on the score of education, and a promise to Ireland that such demands shall be met when they mature, the whole of it cannot now be profitably spent on education. In my opinion, some part of it may profitably be devoted to the development of evening continuation schools and to the promotion of technical instruction; but Ireland ought not to have to choose between the alternatives of wasting or losing the money. Therefore, the grant must be put in a Bill and held up, that it may be expended on proper Irish objects as the opportunity occurs. In the meantime, what is to be done? In a country that is mainly agricultural, and comparatively deficient in private capital and initiative through no fault of her own, the Government believe that the grant may very well be devoted in the interim to economic development, and above all, I should say, to facilitating transit.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N): Can the right hon. Gentleman make some statement as to the drainage of the Bann?

MR. WYNDHAM: That is one of the many projects which may be considered. If this Bill is carried, it will be far more easy to carry out projects on which the opinion of Ireland is generally agreed than it has been in the past, when, after prolonged investigation, a Bill was introduced. It will be possible in future to consider what is necessary for the development of transit facilities in Ireland, or to save large agricultural areas from being destroyed by flood, and to arrive at some fair apportionment of benefit between all parts of Ireland. Last year £100,000 was allocated to harbours in the West of Ireland, and some jealousy was aroused in other parts of the country. It will be only fair, under such a measure as this, to consider favourably a scheme benefiting the north-east corner of Ireland, though I cannot give an absolute undertaking that any one scheme will be dealt with. All these schemes have been put very ably before me, and I only regret that it has been impossible for me to take them up in a business-like manner. It will in the future be far more possible for me to deal with them than in the past. Ireland has now the advantage of popularly-elected bodies, which will inform the Government as to the real needs of the districts. There is too, I believe, a genuine industrial revival in Ireland at the present moment. The schemes which are proposed will have to be examined in their financial aspect by the Treasury, and will then be laid on the Table of the House, and the Report upon them will be issued to Parliament at the end of every year. It may be objected that that does not give a proper or adequate opportunity for discussion in this House.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL Hear, hear.

MR. WYNDHAM: I have given a great deal of time endeavouring to find a fitting solution, but is there any other solution? There is the old method of the past. The old method involved the introduction of a Bill every seven years; and every one imagines that a dole is being given to Ireland. That is not the case. The money belongs to Ireland, and can, in conformity with the opinions of all classes in Ireland, be devoted to these projects. I abandon the method of a separate Bill for each separate object, and I must abandon procedure by Estimates. There is, then, no other procedure known to the House except that of framing schemes and rules and laying them on the Table. Many great purposes have been effected by this method; and any defects in it are to be remedied, not by legislation, but by alteration of the Standing Orders, or by an understanding like that in regard to the Estimates, by which a certain number of days are devoted to certain subjects.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: There is the question of a Provisional Order.

MR. WYNDHAM: That is much the same thing, because you have to pass an Act of Parliament to make it valid. That, at any rate, is a matter which can very well be considered in Committee. I ought not to detain the Committee at any greater length, but I should like to add one word, if I may be allowed to do so, which is strictly germane to the subject matter of this proposal, and which may meet the criticism which is sometimes passed upon similar proposals. It is sometimes asked, "Why is it necessary that public money should be devoted in Ireland to purposes which in England and Scotland are carried out by private enterprise?" There are many reasons. Ireland is comparatively deficient in private capital and private initiative, though not wholly deficient; and if the projects under the Bill are carried out the matter will not end there. Private capital and initiative will add much that is necessary to such works as may be carried out by public money. I have been authorised to say that two most patriotic Irishmen—two captains of industry—in view of the happier social conditions now prevailing in Ireland are prepared to take up the question of transport in Ireland on business lines — not with the object of making money, but of giving facilities for organised transport to the remote agricultural districts in Ireland, and of considering what possibilities there may be of aiding industrial and agrarian enterprise. I think it is a matter of deep significance and hopeful augury when I say that Lord Iveagh and Mr. Pirrie, of Harland and Wolff, are prepared themselves to put up all the capital which is necessary, without going to the public, to assist the districts to see what results can be obtained, and in the light of those results to do what they can to develop the transport facilities of the country in the light of modern invention. Nothing so hopeful, nothing so patriotic, nothing so business-like has been done in Ireland since the time of her industrial prosperity towards the end of the eighteenth century. That two captains of industry from Belfast and Dublin, recognising that Ireland is their country, should make an effort throughout the whole of Ireland, east and west, north and south, and should come forward with their wealth, business ability, and command of expert assistance to help the whole country without regard to political divisions, is a matter of hopeful significance, and goes a long way to justify what we are attempting to do on a small scale with public money.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): The announcement the right hon. Gentleman made at the conclusion of his speech is, as he rightly said, an important, significant, and hopeful one, and it is an indication of the changed condition of Ireland at this moment which creates the greatest opportunity for statesmanship which has existed in that country for a century. I think it is important that the House should clearly understand exactly the business on which we are engaged. It was right and it was necessary, I think, that the right hon. Gentleman should have made the interesting speech which he has just delivered, but the Motion which is before the House is one simply to allocate £185,000 to Irish purposes. That sum, we are told, is a fair equivalent for the money obtained by England and Wales under the Education Act last year. The passing of the Resolution which is before the House does not in the smallest degree bind us to agreement to any of the propositions put forward by the right hon. Gentleman as to the particular allocation of this money. In the first place, let me say that I regret that the right hon. Gentleman did not explain to us more in detail how he arrived at the figure of £185,000. He pointed out that in past times the sum of the equivalent grant for Ireland was based on the proportion of Ireland's contribution to the general Exchequer, and he has most properly pointed out that that was an utterly fallacious test. He has said that in this instance it is calculated on the basis of population. On the basis of population we ought to receive about as much as Scotland, but I find from the Scotch Estimates, over which I have just been looking, that Scotland is obtaining £106,000 for the half year, so that that country is obtaining as an equivalent grant £212,000 for the year. On the basis of population we ought to be entitled to £212,000. That is a criticism which may be met at once by some one speaking from the Treasury Bench with greater knowledge than I possess. That is a criticism that may be met on the spur of the moment. If that sum is equivalent to the grant Scotland is getting, then I say she is getting a great deal more than we are getting

MR. WYNDHAM: The right hon. Gentleman speaking for the Treasury will explain more fully than I can, but I think the hon. and learned Gentleman is in error in supposing that any preferential grant is to be given to Scotland. The sum of £1,222,000 is given to England, but the explanation may be that that is the full amount, and that it will not be payable this year, and it has been felt that neither Scotland nor Ireland ought to have the full equivalent. Ireland will only get two-thirds of that amount. I think that the amount mentioned for Scotland would be the amount payable in the half year. There is no intention to differentiate between Scotland and Ireland, and I do not think it has been done.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: All I can say is that the Scotch Estimates provide for a general aid grant—half a year's grant, £106,000. If it turns out that that is so, if on investigation it turns out that Scotland is to get £212,000 a year, then on the basis of population, which the right hon. Gentleman has stated to be the basis of calculation, we are entitled to the same amount. I take it for granted that the right hon. Gentleman, who I am quite sure is anxious to get as much as possible under that grant, will press his claim to get practically the same sum as is given to Scotland. Now, let me say two or three words in a general way about the suggestion as to the allocation of this money. The right hon. Gentleman has repeated this afternoon what he said in introducing the Land Bill the other day, that a first charge upon this money is to be in connection with the Land Bill, to meet certain possible loss on the transaction. Now, I must say that I do not think this a convenient or proper opportunity to discuss that question. There is no question before the House at the present moment as to the allocation of money, and it would be both premature and improper now to express any settled feeling as to the propriety of putting any charge upon that at all in connection with the Land Bill. That must stand upon its own merits, and must be discussed in connection with the Land Bill. There is nothing in this Resolution to bind us on that matter. There is nothing in the Bill. The allocation of a portion of this money to the purposes of the Land Bill will be by a clause in the Land Bill itself, and that will be the proper opportunity of discussing whatever arises upon it; and, therefore, I content myself with saying upon this occasion that I am not to be taken as expressing my acquiescence at all as to the suggestion that there will be any lien for the purposes of the Land Bill upon this £185,000. That must be left an absolutely open question so far as this Resolution and its effect upon this Bill is concerned, and it must be left open for discussion when we come to the clause of the Land Bill dealing with the matter.

The second question the right hon. Gentleman dealt with was the question of education; and I confess it came to me as somewhat of a relief to find that, notwithstanding he anticipates taking £50,000 for the first four years and £20,000 a year for congested districts out of the fund, and putting upon it other expenses, there will still be about £100,000 available for Irish purposes. Education in Ireland is put rightly in the forefront of these purposes, and although the right hon. Gentleman has put before the House a most ingenious plea that the whole of the money could not be spent immediately on education, still I must for my part reserve my view altogether as to how much of that sum ought to be devoted immediately, without any reservation, to the purposes of education in the country. I know that the question of transit to which he alluded is as important as any in connection with Ireland, but it is impossible for us to consider at this moment, or to express a settled opinion as to whether a proportion, and what proportion, should be spent upon transit, and in what way it should be spent; therefore I desire to put my position upon this matter perfectly openly on the passage of the Resolution and in acquiescing with the introduction of this Bill. I am not, and, in so far as I am speaking for my colleagues we are not, expressing any opinion whatever as to the desirability of charging this fund with any risk whatever in connection with the Land Bill and with other objects than that of education.

The real question that we are called upon to decide at this moment is whether this novel procedure of putting this money into the Bill instead of into the Estimates is one that we can approve of. There was great force in what the right hon. Gentleman said about the money being constantly devoted to this or that purpose on the Estimates, but there is one advantage that the voting of money in that way has over the plan that he suggests, and that is that money on the Estimates is subject to discussion and criticism in this House. He said that he desired that the money should not be put upon the Estimates, so that we shall be able to consider and decide in Ireland how it shall be spent. But who are we? When we speak of "we" in connection with this House, although there are only 100 Irish members out of 670 members of this House, I still remember that there are 100 of them, and that they make themselves heard and understood in this House. But when the "we" means Dublin Castle, without any opportunity of revising and discussing Dublin Castle upon the Estimates, naturally we feel a little anxious upon the matter; and I for my part must say at once I am candidly not in favour of any plan which withdraws absolutely from the cognisance of this House, from the criticism and examination of the Irish Members in this House, proposals for the allocation of money for Irish public purposes. I gather from his speech that what he intends is that the plans by which this money will be spent will be submitted to Parliament in the sense that these schemes will be laid on the Table for thirty or forty days, and if they are not objected to at the end of that time they will be effective. But they can be objected to during that period only under the Standing Order, which provides that after twelve o'clock at night, and then only, can any Member move an Address to the Crown disagreeing with what has been done. We know from our experience of the House that that is an utterly ineffective means of criticism. We know that it is not a means of submitting a proposal to the criticism of the House; and so long as the present system of centralised government exists in Ireland it is a most objectionable thing that money which is to be spent should in this way be withdrawn from all opportunity of examination by the representatives of the Irish people At the same time I concede that the right hon. Gentleman has made out a fairly strong case for dealing with this subject otherwise that on the Estimates. The right hon. Gentleman says there is no solution except by changing the Standing Orders of the House, which I do not suppose he would find easy, or the time, to do. But I do not agree with him. It does seem to me that a provision should be put into this Bill saying that these schemes should be placed on the Table of the House, and that they should not have effect until a Resolution of this House has been passed in their favour. There are provisions of that kind in connection with other matters. As far as I recollect, proposals for the expenditure of money for mail contracts at sea are obliged to be laid on the Table of the House, and they cannot take effect until a Resolution of this House approving them has been passed. I do not see why a similar course should not be adopted with regard to these schemes. That would mean that the Government would give an opportunity of discussing the allocation of this large sum of money once every session, and I think that it would be only fair that the necessary time should be devoted to that purpose. I venture to express my views and my reservations on the various points, and that is all that I feel called upon to do just now. I deprecate at this moment the allocation of this money, and I desire to reserve my opinion upon it. I, however, will not feel satisfied unless some arrangement is come to whereby the allocation of the money is subject to the discussion of this House. The passing of this resolution is merely a preliminary stage. When it is passed, the right hon. Gentleman will introduce his Bill and we would see what it proposes. I do not think that it would be possible for the right hon. Gentleman to get his Bill through the House before Easter, and he would have to consider, in the meantime, very seriously this question of giving an opportunity for the discussion of the schemes in future.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said that the hon. and learned Member for Waterford had suggested that this Resolution was of no great importance in itself, but he thought that it had very great importance.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: What I said was that this Resolution did not concern us except with regard to the allocation of the money.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES said that the Resolution was essential with reference to the control of the House over expenditure. If this Resolution was passed it would make for ever a charge on the Consolidated Fund of £185,000. Now, that was a very serious matter. There was another point to which he could not help alluding. The right hon. Gentleman had brought before the House a very serious financial proposal in regard to Land Purchase in Ireland. If the right hon. Gentleman proposed to make Ireland into another Scotland it would be very cheap at the price; but in the meantime the right hon. Gentleman had left him in a somewhat confused position in regard to his financial methods. And here they had a Resolution to bring in a separate Bill dealing with a fragmentary portion of his proposal, and in a most inconvenient form, so far as the Irish Land question was concerned. This £185,000 was to furnish the means for floating the Loan of £12,000,000. It represented the difference between par and the highest price at which the right hon. Gentleman would have to issue his stock. He thought this was a most inconvenient way of dealing with a great financial proposal. All the financial proposals should have been brought into one Bill, and not in this fragmentary fashion. The right hon. Gentleman had told the Committee that this was Irish money, inasmuch as £1,400,000 had been granted for educational purposes in England, and the corresponding sum due to Ireland was £185,000, although he agreed with the hon. and learned Member for Waterford that on a population basis that was not an adequate proportion for Ireland. But surely it could not be said that because England had got £1,400,000 for education therefore Ireland was entitled to £185,000 for Loan flotation expenses or for railways, and possibly a very small portion of it for education.

It was a principle of sound finance that when a sum was charged on the Consolidated Fund the purpose to which it was to be devoted must be distinctly specified. There were, in fact, very few charges on the Consolidated Fund — such as the salaries of the Judges and of Mr. Speaker, which, in the opinion of the House of Commons, should always be paid every year. The sums were always definitely allocated for a definite and specified purpose. Now, in the present case there was no definite purpose specified. For aught he knew a portion of this sum of £185,000 might be expended on a Roman Catholic University for Ireland. He was not arguing against that, but he maintained that that ought to be left to the House to decide. He re-echoed the request of the hon. and learned Member for Waterford to know who "we" is, or rather what "we" are. He presumed that it was the right hon. Gentleman himself and the Lord Lieutenant. If that were so, it was an extremely dangerous thing to make a charge on the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom and leave the expenditure of it wholly in the discretion of the Department of the Lord Lieutenant. He agreed with the hon. and learned Member for Waterford that if this £185,000 was to be paid year by year it ought to be put on the Estimates and not as a permanent charge on the Consolidated Fund. What was the right hon. Gentleman afraid of? He suggested various bugbears and bogies. But if the money were put on the Estimates the amount could be varied from year to year. If the population diminished the amount could be cut down. But once put on the Consolidated Fund no alteration could be made in it.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND said he suggested that a clause should be inserted in the Bill stating that the schemes were not to take effect until after a resolution approving them had been passed by the House.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES said that he personally preferred that the money should be put on the Estimates.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.) said the question at issue could not be dealt with as if it were a mere detail of Irish Administration. It was a very serious matter of finance, affecting the charges on the Consolidated Fund; and, in considering such a question, the Committee ought to have the advantage of the presence and guidance of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was the guardian of that fund. Unhappily, under this Government we had got into such a lax method of finance that anybody thought they could raise millions of money by methods utterly unknown to our previous practice. It had been said, and truly said, that the charges on the Consolidated Fund were for a definite purpose. The charges on the Consolidated Fund, such as the charge of the Public Debt, the Civil List of the Sovereign, and the family of the Sovereign, and the salaries of the Judges, were intended to be withdrawn from the control of the House, so that they could not be discussed like the Votes in Committee of Supply. The words of the Motion now before the House were—

> "That it is expedient to authorise the payment out of the Consolidated Fund of an annual sum not exceeding £185,000, to provide a special grant to be used for the purposes of the development of Ireland."

Was there ever such a slipshod way of dealing with finance? Really, this happy-go-lucky way of dealing with finance as if it did not matter a straw whether or not the principles by which grants had hitherto been dealt with were adhered to, promised badly for the future financial position of the country. If a new charge was to be placed on the Consolidated Fund, the House ought to be told the purpose for which it was intended, and the manner in which it was to be dealt with. Surely it must have been by accident that this course had been decided on. Surely some more regular method of dealing with the finances of the country ought to be adopted than that proposed in this Resolution.

MR. WYNDHAM said he could not leave the attack of the right hon. Gentleman unnoticed, even for one moment. The right hon. Gentleman had suggested that this had been brought forward in a happy-go-lucky manner. Whether the right hon. Gentleman had arrived at that conclusion from the speech he (Mr. Wyndham) had made he did not know. He perhaps ought to have made a longer speech, but, at any rate, he thought he had made himself intelligible. He had thought that he had made intelligible in his speech, the purpose for which this grant was to be used. It must not be supposed for one moment that this policy had been hastily adopted. It might be an erroneous policy in the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman, but it was a policy upon which his heart had been set for two and a quarter years, in order that Ireland in the future should not be defrauded of her fair share from the common exchequer of the United Kingdom. He believed Ireland had been the sufferer, but of this he was quite sure, that the question, whether or not the two countries received as partners in the common exchequer founded in 1817 their fair mutual advantages, was a question that ought not to be involved in obscurity, and it was involved in obscurity now. Hon. Members sitting for British constituencies held—and they may be perfectly right in their opinion—that Ireland was the spoiled child of the national exchequer. On the other hand, Irish Members, Unionists as well as Nationalists, held that Ireland had not always derived the advantages from this partnership to which she was entitled, if the promises of Pitt and Castlereagh were to be carried out in the spirit as well as in the letter. He had come to the conclusion, rightly or wrongly, that the method by which not only justice to Ireland but justice to England and justice to Scotland could be secured was, that when a grant was given to one country out of the common exchequer, equivalent grants should be given to the two other countries, the money not to be spent on each country for a common object, but for the particular purpose which would benefit it most.

MR. BLAKE (Longford, S.) said the view taken on the Irish Benches was sufficiently clear to justify the view that where political connections existed such as those which existed between these three different nationalities, as they were called, necessarily involved some special security for fair and just dealing, particularly with regard to those who were the weaker members of the partnership; and when for a purpose local to one partner the common fund was drawn upon, there should be a provision that there should be an equivalent amount at the disposal of the weaker partners for their purposes. But it would never do to say that the purpose must be just the same as that for which one partner had rightly claimed to draw upon the common exchequer. The need might not be the same; there might be as great, or greater, needs on the part of the other partners, but for different objects. The right hon. Gentleman had given one example which he thought would have settled the whole question. £6,200,000 were given to England for education, which was admittedly a local question, and all that was given to Ireland for its so-called equivalent grant was £71,000. That was enough to show that the present system did not produce justice, or give security for justice, but produced, on the contrary, rank injustice. While he entirely agreed with the general observations of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Monmouthshire that we had, when things were plainer and simpler, a rule which was a wise rule, on the other hand he contended that the present situation had been proved to require that security should be given to the other two partners in the United Kingdom, and that they should have the opportunity, after deliberation, of expending for the purposes most needed by them the equivalent of that grant which the larger and dominant partner demanded for purposes that were most important to itself. That being so, the most convenient way to do it would be to put the grant on the Consolidated Fund that it might appear upon the Statute-book; and it devolved upon those who objected to the adoption of that plan to propound some efficient plan for the remedy of this injustice, and to give that security at the risk of their objections to the grant being put on the Consolidated Fund being disregarded.

The prime thing was to secure justice being done; and as he was strongly in support of this plan, unless some other equally efficient means could be obtained for securing the permanent assistance of the equivalent fund for Ireland, so was he equally firm in declaring that it was absolutely essential that some means should be found whereby the control of the House of Commons might remain over the allocation of the money which, from year to year, was granted for Irish purposes. The right hon. Gentleman proposed that any scheme which the Irish Executive determined was for the benefit of Ireland should be laid on the Table after twelve o'clock at night, and unless an Address disaffirmed that view, and another scheme was created, the scheme should remain. It was not necessary to point out what an evasion of the privileges of the House that was. The right hon. Gentleman, who acknowledged the sole and exclusive right of the House of Commons to deal with this money, should devise a plan for giving the House effective power over it, and the effective power should be something analogous to putting this sum on the Estimates. The sum, of course, was voted as a whole, but he thought the disposition of it should come within the purview of this House. We were departing from old Constitutional forms, and the right hon. Gentleman now proposed to depart still further from them in the disposition of this grant. If they were going to depart from the old Constitutional forms of the House of Commons, let them depart as little as possible; and let them, if they were going to travel in new paths, determine that those paths should be in a line with those forms, and that any proposal of the Irish Executive should be a proposal to the House, upon which there could be a debate and a division. That was really the nearest approach that could be made to the absence of the substance of the Constitutional power of this House, consistent with the remedying of the injustice which the right hon. Gentleman was most earnestly seeking to remove.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said he did not gather that anyone had any objection to the object that the right hon. Gentleman had in view. It was with regard to the machinery for carrying out that object that the discussion had arisen. When the Prime Minister stated that this Resolution would form part of the business of the day he said he did not think it would lead to any controversy, yet, on the contrary, it had involved the House in a great constitutional debate. He agreed with the hon. Member for Waterford that there were two methods which might be adopted—first, the putting of this sum upon the Estimates, and second, a special Bill like the Marine Works Bill. There was a great deal of sanctity about the Estimates, but when it was worked out in the House it meant that one or two only of the Estimates were discussed and the remainder were closured. Had the right hon. Gentleman considered this matter in the light of a Provisional Order in this House? Nothing could be more simple than for the Irish Executive to arrive at a method of allocation, and then to proceed by Provisional Order. He objected to this being left entirely to Dublin Castle. The Irish Executive should produce a Provisional Order Bill, which, if it was disputed, would be sent upstairs, after which it might come down for discussion in the House. That would be a far better method than to lay the matter on the Table of the House and discuss it after midnight. He thought the right hon. Gentleman, instead of choosing the path of least resistance, had taken that which would lead to most discussion.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): There was one suggestion that was made by the Member for Waterford as to the allocation of this money to Ireland which, I think, well deserves the serious consideration of this House. The hon. Member suggested that the allocation of this sum should be placed in the Irish Land Bill, just as the sum of £2,200,000 for

England was placed in the Education Bill.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: The right hon. Gentleman misunderstood me. What I said was that a certain portion of this money had been provided for in the Irish Land Bill when it was introduced.

MR. WYNDHAM: In the Bill which will be brought in after this Resolution is accepted there is only a passing reference to charges which may be imposed by another Bill to be passed this session. There is nothing explicit in this Bill.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: That is exactly my point. The partial allocation of this money is provided for in certain clauses of the Land Purchase Bill, and not in this Bill at all.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: This Bill we have not seen, and we do not know what it may contain. I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that the Irish Land Bill referred to certain moneys which were at the disposal of Ireland for certain purposes, and which would be guaranteed to Ireland by another Bill. But why should it not be guaranteed by the Land Bill itself? There is no difference of opinion in the House on the point that this money should be given to Ireland, and no difference, I apprehend, that there ought to be no rigid restriction. It should be given to objects which are generally for the benefit of Ireland. What we do object to is that the allocation of this money should be withdrawn from the cognisance of Parliament. The question seems to be in the most curious position. Having said we agree that the money should be given to Ireland, and not be necessarily confined to education, the question is: How is it to be done, and how is the amount to be settled? I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman this question. He has, I believe, selected population as the basis as being of more advantage to Ireland: Would not the old system of proportionate payments give a larger amount to Ireland than he proposes to give?

MR. WYNDHAM: No, we should only then have got £120,000 instead of the £185,000 we get now.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The sum involved is £2,200,000 Under what I may call the Goschen arrangement—because as we change Chancellors of the Exchequer we change our systems altogether, and what is rank heresy under one is supreme constitutional doctrine under another—you would have given to Ireland nine-eightieths of this £2,200,000 a year, which amounts to £247,500, and the eleven-eightieths, which would be the share of Scotland, amounts to £302,500, whereas in the Scottish Estimates we are getting only £212,000. It is difficult to see one's way under this new procedure.

MR. WYNDHAM: I do not know on what the right hon. Gentleman is basing his calculation The grant in aid of English education is, in round figures, £1,400,000.

MR. BUCHANAN (Perthshire, E.) pointed out that the sum in the Estimates was £1,100,000 for the half year.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I think it is very much to be deplored—in fact I might use a stronger word—that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should not be in the House when a matter is being discussed which eminently appertains to his Department, and on which he ought to advise the House. We cannot help remembering that the late Chancellor of the Exchequer took a very strong view on this subject. First of all we had Lord Goschen who gave to the three countries in a certain fixed proportion. Then we had the late Chancellor of the Exchequer who repudiated that system altogether. As a Scottish Member I have again and again taken part in urging that system upon him, but he has altogether repudiated the idea of an equivalent grant, saying that the granting of money to one country by no means implied that a corresponding sum should be granted to another country. He has said—

> "We will attend to your wants when you explain them to us; satisfy us that you require certain sums of money, and we will be open-handed in giving them to you; but let us hear no more of these equivalent grants."

That is the doctrine which has been propounded year after year by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, and now the system of equivalent grants is accepted by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, and embodied in the Resolution before us. In these circumstances I think the highest financial authority in the country ought to be here to guide the House of Commons in coming to a decision on this matter.

As to the manner of dealing with this question, I am unable to perceive any objection to doing with respect to this money what was done with respect to the English money last year; that is to say, to state the sum in the actual legislation with which it is involved. The House of Commons can then express its view as to the manner in which the money ought to be applied. But to take it from the cognisance of the House, and leave it to the Irish Government to allot according to its sweet will and pleasure, I think would be an innovation very much to be deprecated on many grounds.

MR. WYNDHAM: During the opening remarks of the right hon. Gentlemen the Leader of the Opposition, I felt, and I think I may still feel, that we were not so much at variance as some would suppose. There is a general agreement, certainly amongst those who are directly interested in Ireland, that it is inconvenient to proceed by a special *ad hoc* Bill for such purposes as draining a particular river or constructing a particular light railway. There is also a general agreement of opinion, I think, that to proceed by means of the Estimates would not be satisfactory in such cases, that it would leave a doubt as to whether the three partners in the business are treating each other fairly, and that that doubt ought not to remain where one of the partners helps himself on such a liberal scale as is denoted by the sum of £1,400,000 a year. All who have watched what has occurred in the past would prefer that, if it is admitted that Ireland has a claim, she should have that claim satisfied, and agree that she ought not to wait for three, four or five years until she could say, "This is a good educational project," and have the £185,000 placed on the Estimates. We have attempted to find a new method. I am really the last person in the world to desire to treat the established canons of finance with disrespect. I have the greatest respect for the traditions of this House, but I have felt that some new device must be found in order that the evil which has occurred in the past should not occur again. When I dealt with this matter, I made no allusion to bringing in schemes and submitting reports to Parliament, although that has been done in respect of some very important matters — for instance, in respect to the borough boundaries in London. That was not the policy of my speech. I indicated two plans by which discussion might be secured—either by a change in the Standing Orders, or by an understanding, with the leave of the House, analogous to the understanding which exists in regard to the Estimates. I desire that at least as great facilities for discussion as exist in the case of the Estimates should exist in respect of these schemes and proposals. But, as the hon. Member for South Tyrone has pointed out, we may exaggerate the opportunities of discussion on the Estimates. Three or four days are allotted to Irish Estimates. There is often, unhappily, something exciting momentary interest, and the whole of one day, and sometimes the whole of three days, is devoted to that one topic, and a number of important matters, involving large sums of money for the development of the country, have to be passed in silence when the Estimates are run through. Although in practice the advantages are not so great as is sometimes represented, I desire that the opportunities for discussing these schemes should at any rate be as great as upon the Estimates, and I do not at all despair of finding, between now and the Second Reading of the Bill, a satisfactory opportunity for discussion.

SIR HENRY FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) understood the right hon. Gentleman to accept the principle that Parliamentary control over these schemes should be preserved, and that the matter should not rest with the Irish Executive. That being so, he suggested that words should be added to the Resolution providing that the money should be used "in a manner to be hereafter determined by Parliament."

Mr. WYNDHAM said he could not accept so important an Amendment without careful consideration. He had really gone a long way to meet the criticisms which had been made. He undertook not to ask for the Second Reading of the Bill until after Easter, and that a fair opportunity for discussion should be provided.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND was glad the right hon. Gentleman had not acceded to the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton. The matter ought to be settled after careful consideration, and as far as he was concerned, he was quite satisfied with the undertaking given by the Chief Secretary. He had no doubt that if, between now and the Second Reading of the Bill, the right hon. Gentleman would consult the representatives of the various feelings in the House he would be able to arrive at a satisfactory scheme. That being so, he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would now be allowed to get his Resolution, and that the great constitutional question, which he to some extent broached but did not describe as such, would be allowed to rest for the present.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT thought the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman a satisfactory one. They all agreed that the money should in some way be secured to Ireland, and that it should be secured in such a manner as to reserve and assert the control of the House of Commons over its disposal.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.) hoped the Leader of the Opposition would be able to convince the Chief Secretary by the calculation he had made that Ireland was entitled to the larger sum he had named. As to the substance of the proposition before the Committee, he agreed with the Chief Secretary, who proposed to adhere to the principle that when money was voted to the stronger partner an equivalent grant should be made to Ireland. They might as well argue that when ships were built in England they should have an equal number built in Ireland. That of course would be absurd. Ireland wanted the money for some other purpose. He hoped the Chief Secretary for Ireland would not change his plan very much. What they wanted first was to have the money voted, and then distribute it according to Irish opinion. The House of Commons would take very good care that nothing would be done contrary to its wishes. What they said was that the Chief Secretary should pay attention to Irish public opinions. The Chief Secretary for Ireland had considerable facilities for knowing Irish wants, and he personally had every confidence in the scheme to be brought forward. He was glad that the right hon. Gentleman had not put into the Resolution the word suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton.

Mr. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) said they had been told that Ireland would only gain £150,000 a year by this proposal. They would find on the Estimates that England got £1,100,000 for half a year, and that meant £2,200,000 for the whole year. Anyone could calculate how much nine-eightieths of £2,200,000 were. There was no mystery about the matter. Under the Equivalent Grant system Ireland got nine-eightieths of the amount given to England, and Scotland got eleven-eightieths.

Mr. WYNDHAM: It is in the ratio of nine to eighty.

Mr. CALDWELL said that if they added the sums together they would find it came to far more than £150,000.

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of the Consolidated Fund, of an annual sum not exceeding £185,000 for providing a special grant to be used for the purposes of the Development of Ireland.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow.

THE ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) said there were certain questions he should like to put to the Secretary of State for War which concerned the changes made by him in this Bill two years ago in reference to Courts of Inquiry. Upon that occasion he was in the unusual position of supporting the War Office against the lawyers, who tried to tie up all Courts of Inquiry so as to be of the same kind. Fresh statutory provisions were put in with regard to certain classes, but some of them maintained that they did not and could not apply to all Courts of Inquiry. There must be prerogative Courts of Inquiry outside the Statute altogether, being in the nature of inquiries merely to satisfy the general commanding the forces in the field as to whether it was necessary to take certain disciplinary action or not. Occasions of this kind had arisen, and must arise, in time of war. Recently certain answers had been made which had rather confused his mind upon the subject, and he should like to ask the Secretary of State for War if he would clear up the difficulty which had arisen. An Order was issued as to surrenders during the war, which appeared to state that everybody having anything to do with surrenders would in future be tried by Court-martial under Section 40 of the Army Act.

Recently a statement had been published in the newspapers on behalf of one of the officers whose conduct was a subject of an inquiry or a Court-martial. A statement had been published on behalf of that officer that he had been restored to his position, and they had had in consequence a Question put in the House as to whether this Order which was published as to Courts-martial had been acted upon. He understood the Secretary of State for War to say that it had been acted upon, and that Courts-martial had been held in every case. He believed the answer given was that a Court-martial was held in this particular case. He should like to ask whether they misunderstood the Secretary of State for War on that occasion, and whether Courts-martial had been held in all these cases. It was not possible under all the circumstances to hold either a Court-martial or a statutory Court of Inquiry in the first instance, and there must be many cases where those concerned were prisoners at the time the first enquiry took place, and where it might be necessary to take temporary disciplinary action in their absence, and therefore without the securities which were required by the Army Act and effected by the Amendments which were introduced two years ago.

As a great deal of confusion existed in the public mind on that subject, he asked the Secretary of State for War to inform them what was the present War Office policy on this subject. This involved a question discussed in the House on two occasions this session, on the suggestion of his hon. and gallant friend the Member for Aberdeen, as to whether an officer must be heard in his own defence. It was obviously impossible in all cases to hear an officer in his own defence in the preliminary or informal Courts. He should like to know whether there was not some mistake in regard to cases of surrender; whether the informal Court of Inquiry was held under the provisions of an Army Order made last year, and on the Amendment introduced two years ago; and whether the right hon. Gentleman thought the present system as regarded Courts-martial, and both formal and informal Courts of Inquiry, was satisfactory.

*COLONEL WELBY (Taunton) said he had very little to add with regard to Courts of Inquiry except to ask the Secretary of State for War first of all why that General Order was delayed for a whole year after the debate in this House, because at that time the war in South Africa was going on, and that seemed the very time when those new rules were required. He would be glad to know whether any specific cases had come under those rules, either during the war, or after the conclusion of peace. He should like the right hon. Gentleman to state what effect that order had had, and whether it had in any way met the difficulties which he had in mind when he himself proposed alterations. He wished to know whether the new rules had overcome those difficulties, and whether it had made it easier for the officers who were involved in surrenders to feel that justice was being done to them.

This Army Bill had only just been printed, and many hon. Members had been hoping that the difficulties which were put before the House on the 11th of March were going to be dealt with. He thought that some clause would have been proposed in the present Bill which would enable the War Office, under most conditions, to give an officer the power of referring to a Court-martial when it was alleged that he had committed an offence contrary to the Army Act. Unfortunately there was no change whatever in this respect in the Bill, and he was afraid that what took place on 11th March showed that these Courts of Inquiry had not prevented this House being made a Court of Appeal from the Royal prerogative of judgment. On that occasion the atmosphere was very heated, and he thought the right hon. Gentleman was drawn away from the main question at issue and went too much into detail. He hoped that in the cooler atmosphere of the present occasion the right hon. Gentleman would give an answer to those arguments and entreaties he put before them. He reminded the House that the purport of his argument was that an appeal should be given to military officers when a charge could be framed. He knew it was a mistake to say that naval officers had the right of appeal, because they had not; but that in almost every case where it seemed to be just to give the officer an appeal he was given it, not as a right but as a privilege. He asked the right hon. Gentleman whether under the new system which was being instituted there could not be something either understood, or by Army Order, by which this appeal should be allowed to military officers on most occasions.

He proposed at a later stage to put before the House amendments on this Bill dealing more fully with this subject. His argument briefly was that by giving an appeal to a Court-martial they gave the officer the right of appeal to a Court in which he had the utmost confidence when he appealed against the prerogative of Royal judgment. The prerogative of mercy would still remain with the Crown either to confirm or to mitigate the sentence or to remit it entirely. He asked for this change because under present conditions this House was made the Court of Appeal. Their debates were read in mess-rooms and canteens, and such scenes as occurred in the House on March 11th were infinitely more hurtful to the discipline of the Army than the retention of a number of incompetent officers in the service. He hoped his right hon. friend would take his suggestion into serious consideration, if it was only with the object of getting rid of the practice of this House being made a Court of Appeal in these matters. He asked this also because the conditions of the Army were necessarily changing. In future the defence of the Empire would not be entirely with the professional soldier, the regular troops could never again be sufficient; they must be the nucleus around which other forces would gather; and what the House had to do therefore was to legislate not only for the regular and professional officer, but also for the great citizen army which would be called to service if danger threatened the Empire. He entreated the right hon. Gentleman to look at this question in the larger and broader light of modern necessity.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford) said he regretted that some delay had occurred in the issuing of the Order to which reference had been made. As far as he was concerned the matter was taken in hand at once, but there was some delay in carrying out the necessary formalities. He was very sorry that this should have been so, because personally he attached great importance to these Courts of Inquiry being held on oath. They were now in working, and he was informed that in all cases of surrender either a Court of Inquiry on oath or a Court-martial was held. He thought no actual Court-martial was held in the case of Lord Methuen; but, during his illness, a general Court of Inquiry was held which entirely absolved him from all responsibility for the disaster and showed that he had done all that a man could do. In these cases experience showed that the more formal a Court of Inquiry could be made the better. At the same time he fully recognised, with the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean, that there were cases of surrendering in which it was often many months before a formal Court could be held, and where they had to content themselves very often with a much less detailed and useful inquiry.

With regard to the point raised by his hon. and gallant friend the Member for Taunton, he would say again what he had often said in that House, that he had a prejudice in favour of a Court of Inquiry where a definite charge was made or could be properly made. But occasions very frequently arose in which no inquiry could have been held. Where the military opinion was that a man, to whom they entrusted the lives of, it might be, hundreds of men, was not efficient for the discharge of his duties, or that his sense of discipline was not such as to enable his superior officer to feel confidence in him, if they were to put the immense power which was put into the hands of a commanding officer to exercise discipline over every man, there was nothing for it but that there should be power for the superior officer to recommend the Commander-in-Chief to authorise that man's discharge. Much as he was in favour of inquiry by Courts-martial, or by small Courts of Inquiry on active service, into those questions which gave them so much trouble, he could honestly say that those were not the only cases in which serious doubt arose afterwards, or in which the relatives or friends of the officer found cause to dissent from the decision. He had just as much trouble with cases that had been decided by Courts-martial, and in which every attempt had been made afterwards to reopen the decision and every effort made to bring forward palliating and extenuating circumstances in order to prevent that finality of sentence it was desired to obtain. He thought that nothing had been brought forward to show that for a moment there had been any want of consideration or of justice in the way in which the summary power of dispensing with a man's services had been exercised.

MR. BROMLEY DAVENPORT (Cheshire, Macclesfield) said that the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War had not given very much satisfaction to the House by his reply on questions that had been raised. He thought that what the House felt was that an opportunity ought to be given to every officer for stating his case and his defence when a charge was brought against him. The right hon. Gentleman, on a previous occasion, had given two examples to show that it was impossible to grant a Court-martial in all cases. The illustration which he gave to-day was of an officer who had lost his nerve. He did not know what the right hon. Gentleman meant by an officer losing his nerve, unless he had displayed some cowardice in front of the enemy.

MR. BRODRICK: Of course, a man may show want of nerve by vacillation of purpose.

MR. BROMLEY DAVENPORT said that in whatever way the officer lost his nerve, it was not suggested that in every case he should be proceeded against by Court-martial; but if an officer insisted on a Court-martial, and on being shown up as an officer who had lost his nerve, the responsibility was with him. He must have done something that was capable of proof, or if he had not done so what right had they to say that he had lost his nerve? The other case mentioned was that the officer had shown a general want of capacity. But it must be remembered that an officer did not get the command of his regiment by a process of seniority. He was selected by the Commander-in-Chief, who had before him the whole military history of the officer, and had had confidential reports for years past, and it ought to be practically impossible for the Commander-in-Chief to make a mistake. But if he did make a mistake so glaring and hideous as to appoint an officer who a very few years after being selected proved himself absolutely incompetent, he thought some portion of the blame ought to fall on the Commander-in-Chief, and he ought not to be able to cover up his mistake by simply removing the officer.

The right hon. Gentleman might say that confidential reports were not sufficiently to be relied on. If so, he agreed with the right hon. Gentleman. There was no one who detested confidential reports more than he did. They were unfair and un-English, and there was nothing to be said in favour of them. But the right hon. Gentleman had pinned his faith to them, and was seeking to make them more objectionable still by the regulation that the reporter need not himself read over his report to the officer reported on. That opened the door to every sort of iniquity, and to what had been said on a previous occasion — whispering away of the character of an officer without making any specific charge against him. It came to this, that if an officer was passed over in an appointment for which he had thought himself fitted, he would at once assume, very likely unfairly, that he had been secretly adversely reported upon by his commanding officer.

The hon. Member for Taunton had suggested the possibility of inserting a new clause in this Bill, which would meet the views of himself and his friends, but it was a question whether that would have any effect. This was the most extraordinary Act the House had to pass. Acts of Parliament, with the solitary exception of this one, were capable of enforcement in the Courts of Justice, but this Act was not. A soldier or a non-commissioned officer had the right to demand a Court-martial if he felt himself aggrieved, and therefore he was comparatively safe; but the commissioned officer alone of all the subjects of His Majesty had no redress, and no remedy, if he were treated with injustice by his superiors. The Courts of Law were not open to him and he could not demand a Court-martial. This House might insert any clauses it pleased, and pass any number of Acts of Parliament, but the military authorities could, if they chose, set them at defiance. He was quite sure the time had come when this iniquity should be removed. It was a fact at present, that although the military authority existed by the will and pleasure of this House, as expressed in this Army Act, the military authority was greater than Parliament and the law, because it could, with absolute impunity, set both at defiance. It was as well to understand what was the meaning of the Act The hon. Baronet the Member for Forest of Dean had reminded the right hon. Gentleman that he had made certain Amendments to the Rules of Procedure in 1901 in deference to the strongly expressed views of the House, and he asked him for an explanation of what had been done. He had waited anxiously for that explanation, and it was not forthcoming, and he had waited more anxiously because he had asked the right hon. Gentleman whether the Rules of Procedure provided that no statement made by an officer before a Committee of Inquiry should be used against him, and for that reason the clause providing that the whole of the proceedings of the Committee of Inquiry should be forwarded to the officer had been struck out.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The observations and questions of the hon. Member appear to me to be matters which ought to be postponed to the Committee Stage.

Mr. BROMLEY DAVENPORT said that he might suggest, with all deference, that the Rules of Procedure would not come before the Committee. They were not included in the Act, and it was the Act which would give them the force of law. He asked the right hon. Gentleman whether the Rule of Procedure 124, Sub-section (L) did not provide that —

> "The proceedings of a Court of Inquiry, or any confession, statement, or answer to a question made or given at a Court of Inquiry, shall not be admissible in evidence against an officer or soldier."

And whether Sub-section (K) of the same Rule did not read—

> "The whole of the proceedings of a Court of Inquiry will be forwarded by the President to the officer who assembled the Court."

And until that rule was amended by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War, it contained these words—

> "And that commanding officer will, on his own responsibility, form such opinion as he thinks just."

What he asked the right hon. Gentleman was, why he struck out these words? He would defer any further observations until the Committee Stage.

*Mr. SPEAKER: I think these are questions which ought to be postponed until the Committee Stage. They are not in order at this time.

Bill read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

NATIONAL EXPENDITURE.

Ordered, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire whether any plan can be advantageously adopted for enabling the House, by Select Committee or otherwise, more effectively to make an examination, not involving criticisms of policy, into the details of National Expenditure."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

NAVAL FORCES BILL.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be read a third time."

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) said that so far as this Bill provided for additional forces for the Navy he had no objection to it. But the Bill departed from the usual practice, which was that conditions of service and the pay and pensions of the Naval Volunteers and the Royal Marines should be inserted in an Act of Parliament. There was a great deal of objection to the proposal in the Bill. For the first time, the Admiralty were taking power to employ new forces, and also to frame new regulations. For instance, Sub-section 2 of Clause 1 stated that the Admiralty might make regulations to carry into effect the provisions of this section, giving the Admiralty practically absolute power. He put down an Amendment to the effect that the regulations which the Admiralty made should be laid on the Table of the House. In the numerous cases where Parliament delegated to Secretaries of State power to make regulations which would have the effect of Acts of Parliament, it was always stipulated that such regulations should be laid on the Table of the House; and there were other cases in which such regulations were not to have effect until they had been laid for a specified number of days. He thought that Parliament had already protected the House of Commons in a matter of this kind; because under the Rules of Procedure Act, it was laid down that any rule passed under any Act of Parliament of a legislative character should be presented to the House of Commons and lie on the Table for forty days. He ventured to think that that would apply to Clause 1 of this Bill, because it proposed to give the Admiralty power to make regulations which would have statutory effect. He thought his Amendment was most reasonable, and that the proposal of the Government introduced an entirely new practice, which was rather strange on the part of a conservative and constitutional Government. The present Government would not be always in office, and the power now proposed would be exercised by their successors. It was, therefore, not exactly a Party question; but it was a matter of great importance that Parliament should determine the conditions of service and the pay and pensions of the men to be employed. Under the old practice, all these were put nto an Act of Parliament, which had to be sanctioned by the House of Lords. That was now to be taken away, and power was to be delegated to the Secretary of the Admiralty, which hitherto had only been enacted by statute. Of course, the pay of the men would ultimately have to appear on the Estimates, which, however, would not be submitted to the House of Lords; and that in itself was a constitutional departure.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said the Admiralty certainly did take very large powers under this Bill, even larger powers than those referred to by the hon. Member. There was power given under Section 5 to the Admiralty to determine the number of men of which the Royal Naval Reserve should consist. The ancient practice was that the House should determine the number of men, whether in the Fleet or in the Reserve, and the clause was in itself really unconstitutional. But, practically, the House would have the power of over-riding the clause, because on Vote A for the Navy they might reject the number of men proposed by the Admiralty, and insert another number. However, Clause 5 was as bold a clause as even the present Government had ever introduced.

There were two other points he wished to mention. Under Clause 4 the Admiralty took power to enlist men for non-continuous service for any period not exceeding twelve years, and then pass them into the Reserve. That was really a proposal to have two different kinds of service in the Fleet, which would be extremely undesirable and extremely dangerous. He would remind the House that no amelioration of the Navy had been so great and beneficent as the introduction of continuous service. It had made the sailor what he was; and more especially in times like the present, when the sailor required much greater and more continuous training than ever before. The man engaged on non-continuous service could not be so good as the man on continuous service, and would also be a disturbing element on the ship.

His third point was that he had a profound disinclination to see the Navy cursed with amateur bluejackets and amateur Marines. The power it was proposed to give the Admiralty to raise Royal Naval Volunteers and Royal Marine Volunteers was a very dangerous one indeed; and he could not conceive on whose advice such a course was adopted. He was perfectly convinced that these Volunteers would not do any good; and that the new arrangement was unbusinesslike and could not work well. It had been tried before, and, having failed, was abandoned. Was it any more likely to succeed now?

*SIR CHARLES DILKE said that he did not fully agree with his hon. friend; but he did share his views with regard to the Naval Volunteers not being of that amount of utility which some people thought. With regard to continuous service his hon. friend uttered the last cry of despair on behalf of the old naval school but the arguments addressed to the Committee presided over by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Berwick, and the opinions of that Committee proceeded on a basis of overwhelming strength. The case in favour of a number of short-service men was overwhelming. The Secretary to the Admiralty stated that the Admiralty looked forward to taking only one-fourth of this class; and, even then, they would have a much larger number of long-service men than any other navy in the world. Therefore he thought that the Navy would still remain a long-service Navy, even though it included the proportion of non-continuous service men he had mentioned. With regard to the Volunteers, he would press the Government to make up their minds and tell the Committee that the Volunteers were intended for patrol service, coast service, and so forth, It was not a thing that the House wished that we should trust to Volunteer bluejackets or Volunteer Marines on board battleships. If the Admiralty really meant them to serve in special places, or in patrolling the coast, this should be intimated to the House, so that the men should not be encouraged in the belief that they would be taken into the Fleet.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER, Belfast, W.) said that the hon Member for Mid Lanark had suggested that the Admiralty had made a new departure in this matter, but that was an entire misapprehension. It had never been the practice to submit the rules governing the service of men in the Navy, rules which were practically orders, for discussion in the House of Commons, nor was it necessary to present them under the Rules Publication Act which had been referred to. If submitted under that Act, the rules and orders affecting men actually serving in the Fleet would have to lie on the Table of the House forty days, and to be open to criticism and discussion by "every public body in the United Kingdom." To state the proposition was to demonstrate its absurdity. The course that had been followed by the Admiralty was the one that had always been followed in similar cases. The hon. Member for King's Lynn had enquired how it was that the Admiralty had power to raise a number of men on its own initiative. In that matter, too, the Admiralty were following the usual course, whereby the number of men to serve in the Fleet every year was settled by the Admiralty. Of course that had to be ratified by this House. There was no new provision in the Bill now before the House. It simply followed the ordinary practice, leaving the number of men in the first place to be fixed by the Admiralty and subsequently to be confirmed by this House. The hon. Member had objected to the Volunteers altogether and asked on whose recommendation that proposal was carried into effect. It was on the recommendations of a very strong Committee, containing several experienced naval officers, a Committee whose recommendations were ratified by the Board of Admiralty, and upon that they felt bound to lay the proposal before the House. He was more sanguine as to the Volunteers than either the hon. Member for King's Lynn or the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean. Their duties would differ from those of the old Naval Volunteers. It might be that such duties as had been referred to would be the only ones they would be asked to perform; but time would show the best use that could be made of them. As to the non-continuous service men, it was a mistake to suppose that they were being introduced for the first time into the Navy. There were a large number serving in the Fleet at the present time, though the class now proposed was not exactly the same as the old non-continuous service men. It was absolutely necessary for providing a Reserve to take this step as recommended by the Committee presided over by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Berwick.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth) said he was one of those who looked with the greatest apprehension on the modern tendency to regard it as necessary to have an extremely large reserve of men. He had sat in this House and heard those whose opinions were usually of great value talking at random of the number of men required for the Navy, and totting them up by tens and even hundreds of thousands. He approved of the Bill because he thought it was a moderate and wise one. The Question of a Reserve of men for the Navy was a totally different question to that of the Reserve of the Army, because in the case of the Navy one could almost exactly measure the number of men we should actually require for our war fleet. There were subsidiary services not so easy, of course, of actual measurement. The Admiralty Committee had recognised a great principle never recognised before; the Admiralty had now acted upon that principle. The initial number of men necessary was the number actually required to man efficiently the ships actually available for war service on the outbreak of war; if the Reserve allowed for the usual percentages for sick and other causes of wastage, they would arrive definitely at the actual number of men that it was possible to require for the available war ships. He did not think in these days they need allow any very large percentage for casualties. In the old days with wooden ships very great loss of life occurred, but in most cases, though the men were killed or wounded, the ship survived, and was soon effectively ready for war again as other men could be put into her. Now the position has changed, because in the process of killing and wounding the men, the damage done to the ship destroyed its fighting power for a long period. If the men and ship went down together it could not affect the Reserve in any way, because no ship being available no more men would be required. That must be plain to anybody who studied the subject at all. He had therefore come to the conclusion that the Admiralty Committee had arrived at wise and statesmanlike conclusions, and he was extremely glad that the Admiralty had adopted them and embodied them in the Bill now before the House. The Volunteer part was entirely new, and it would be interesting to see whether Volunteers would be ready to go anywhere. Volunteers for naval service on any other conditions would be a weakness, and not a strength, but it would be interesting to see what the result of this Bill would be, because if they obtained naval Volunteers who were willing to go anywhere, why not military Volunteers also? He did not see in this Bill any danger of relying too much on the non-continuous service men, because we were compelled to have in peace a large number of continuous service men on war ships really not available for warlike operations, and what would happen in time of war would be that those ships would have to be recalled and laid up, and their crews transferred to effective fighting ships. For other purposes a considerable auxiliary force was needed in war. Suppose an enemy's cruiser or a marauder was driven into an estuary. If they had not a force which could be landed in order to take up a dominant position and destroy that ship, the ships that had driven her in would have to remain outside as long as she was there. The men on the war cruisers ought not to be used for that purpose; therefore the Admiralty required force auxiliary to the Navy such as he had described. He believed the Bill to be a good Bill, founded on sound lines, and he would watch with considerable curiosity how it really worked.

Bill read a third time, and passed.

CONTRACTS (INDIA OFFICE) BILL.

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; read the third time, and passed.

UGANDA RAILWAY (MATERIALS).

Address for "Return giving dates of purchase and prices paid for rails, sleepers, girders, locomotives, carriages, and bridge-work obtained for the construction of and working of the Uganda Railway."—(*Mr. O'Doherty.*)

And, there being no further Business set down for the Afternoon Sitting, Mr. Speaker left the Chair till this Evening's Sitting.

EVENING SITTING.

EAST INDIA (PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT).

*CAPTAIN **BALFOUR** (Middlesex, Hornsey) said this was not a subject on which he could pose as an expert, and he must rely upon those who who had a more intimate knowledge of India and the ways of the India Office to deal more fully with that matter. The grievance of Indian civil servants naturally filtered through their relatives and friends, and his attention was drawn to the matter by some of his constituents, who desired that he should draw the attention of the House to the grievances of certain Cooper's Hill students. Upon going into the question, he found that it was one upon which many —like himself—would be ignorant, and therefore he thought he ought to explain as clearly as he could the history of the Cooper's Hill College, and under what inducements those who formed the college, joined it, and went through it into the Indian Civil Service. Coopers' Hill College was established for Indian Civil Engineers in 1871. Before that time the Indian Public Works Department had been recruited by engineers, known as the Stanley Engineers, by competition, after examination in England. That system had broken down, owing to the dissatisfaction with the conditions of the service, and by the year 1868 it was impossible to obtain recruits for the Public Works Department of India. The Government of the day desired to establish a college in this country, to which there should be public competition for entrance, and which should supply in future the engineers for service in India. Sir George Chesney was the first president. The college was widely advertised, and a prospectus was published which gave the conditions of service and the value of the emoluments that might be expected to be received, and like all other prospectuses, it put these matters as attractively as possible, in order to secure recruits for Cooper's Hill College. The college was not established without opposition by this House, and the Government of the day announced that by this college they were establishing a service in India which would be on a level with the two great services of that country, the civil and the military. That induced keen competition, and recruits came forward in great numbers for admission to the college, and everything seemed to be in a most prosperous state. But the conditions held out in the prospectus were not fulfilled, for when the first students from the college got out to India they found the Public Works Department of India, after the breakdown of the Stanley Engineers, had been filled up by civil engineers from wherever the Indian Government could obtain them, and the institution was never put on a level with the Civil and Military Service of India. The result of that was that after 1874 the prospectus which held out these advantages was altered. Therefore, he only wished to draw attention to the grievance of those students who entered the college from 1871 to 1874, when these glowing prospects were held out in the prospectus and were not fulfilled. The supply of students fell off, and competition for entrance into Cooper's Hill College practically ceased.

Those candidates who entered the college between 1871 and 1874 entered the Indian Public Works Service between 1873 and 1877. It was necessary to state that fact because he should have to allude hereafter to the engineers of 1873 and 1877, and he desired it to be distinctly understood that these were the same people as the students of Cooper's Hill between 1871 and 1874; that is to say, they were the students who entered the college at the time this particular prospectus was issued. The complaints of the engineers of Cooper's Hill College of that date were not based on any loose statements made by individuals, nor were they mere grievances put forward by irresponsible persons. The sources from which he had drawn his facts were the letter of the present Viceroy to the Secretary of State for India, and the reply of the Secretary of State; these were public papers which any one might procure, and read with interest, provided they did not become bewildered by the maze of figures. There were other grievances of the engineer service of India besides these particular grievances, and those grievances were entered into by this House in 1890, and means were taken in 1893 to remedy them, but the steps then taken did not affect the particular grievances of these Cooper's Hill students with which he now desired to deal. The Viceroy of India said that the retiring scheme of 1893 gave very inadequate advantage to the officers appointed between 1873 and 1876, very few of whom had been able to avail themselves of it, and in addition to that the special grievances of the Cooper's Hill engineers were not considered. The special grievances of Cooper's Hill engineers were ruled by the Chairman of the Committee to be beyond the competence of the Committee. There was a letter from the first president of the college, Sir George Chesney, which also was not laid before that Committee. The special grievances of these Cooper's Hill engineers were three, one was for compensation to them owing to the depreciation of the currency of India; secondly, payment of their pensions in sterling, that was to say, taking the rupee at 2s., and thirdly, compensation on account of the fact that the rate of promotion had not corresponded with the promise held out in the prospectus which induced them to enter Cooper's Hill College and the India Public Works Service. These grievances were submitted to Lord Curzon, who went fully into them, and who dismissed practically the first two at once, saying that the expressions in the prospectus did not in themselves justify a claim for the pensions being paid in sterling. But it must be remembered that it was originally intended that their service was to be placed on an equality with the two great services of India, the pensions of which were paid in sterling.

The Committee of 1890 went into the question of pensions in connection with the other grievances which were brought before them and recommended that pensions should be paid upon the scale of 1s 9d. to the rupee; that was the pension that would be paid to the Cooper's Hill engineers. But the Viceroy did not absolutely condemn their prayer; he recommended that in consequence of the special claims of the Cooper's Hill students not having been before the Committee and having regard to the promises held out to them in the prospectus, this matter of pensions should be considered on its merits. The real point was the third one, namely, that the rate of promotion had not been in accordance with the promises held out in the prospectus. It must be remembered that this was not the prospectus of a private college; it was an official prospectus prepared with the knowledge of the Indian Government and the Secretary of State for India of the day, and of Sir George Chesney, and therefore it must be regarded as having been issued by the authorities. In fact there was proof of this, because a paragraph was inserted in it, which held out the prospect to the students that when on furlough their allowance should be paid in sterling, taking the rupee at 2s. In deciding certain furlough claims some years ago, Viscount Cross went into the whole question, granted furlough allowance on these terms, and said he had been legally advised that, "although a certain statement in the same prospectus was inaccurate, the prospectus virtually constituted a contract with those who joined before the correction was made." That was fifteen years after. The promises as to promotion were made in a leaflet attached to this prospectus. At the end of a table, prepared to enable candidates to judge of their prospects of advancement, it was explained that from various causes promotion in the past had been somewhat more rapid than might be expected in the future. The expression "somewhat more rapid" would not lead anyone to expect a great difference between the past and the future. But the difference, for example, between the number of years given in the prospectus leaflet and the actual time taken for the promotion of executive engineers to Grade 1 was no less than seven years. Lord Curzon had examined the grievances complained of, and framed a rough estimate of the losses which the officers might have sustained, had set against them the value of other concessions subsequently made, and had suggested—

> "The simplest and most convenient method of satisfying their claims if it should be decided that they were entitled to favourable consideration."

The Secretary of State, in his reply, however, said he could not accept the view of the Indian Government that either the prospectus or the leaflet could be held to imply a guarantee of promotion. He also said no trace of the leaflet could be found in the India Office, and it was impossible to say by whom and on what authority it was issued. It was possible that the noble Lord's advisers might have suffered from loss of memory, and that it was not easy to find pigeon-holed documents.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing) said he could not accept that statement for a moment; the hon. Member must not make that insinuation. The records had been carefully searched and there was no record of this leaflet, and it was impossible to say from whence it came.

*CAPTAIN BALFOUR accepted that statement and repudiated any intention to cast a slur on the India Office. His hon. friend the Member for Central Hull would tell the House what he knew of the leaflet, the author of which was believed to be Sir George Chesney, the president of the College at the time it was issued. He had shown how the prospectus was construed by successive Secretaries of State, and how they acted with regard to furlough allowances. What had been said had not removed the ground for thinking that the leaflet was just as official as the prospectus. Upon the question of the prospectus he might quote the opinion of the Government of India that there was some foundation for a consideration of the grievances based upon that prospectus. The Government of India, on the spot, knowing the work which had been done by the engineers of India, and knowing the circumstances under which that work had been done, might be supported by some hon. Members, at all events, in the view taken by their officials. He would not call it an injustice, but at any rate disappointments had been meted out to those who entered the service when certain advantages were held out to them which had not been fulfilled. In the official answer it was stated that other services at times had suffered from the same causes, and had received no compensation. Other hon. Members, more acquainted with the conditions of India than he was, might in the course of this debate be able to point to at least one instance where something approaching that had been done, and they should not altogether debar considerations of this kind on the ground of precedent. What were the advantages which were considered to counterbalance the claims of the memorialists for the loss they had sustained in consequence of their promotion having been very much slower than was anticipated? What were those advantages? They were these. In the first place there was an increase of pay in the higher grades; and secondly, there was a pension to be given after twenty-five years service, including furlough, instead of after thirty years service, excluding furlough. The promise held out by the Under Secretary for India in 1871 comes in here. In the year 1871 a deputation of students waited upon Sir George Chesney asking that the rules of the Civil Service in regard to including furlough in the period of service reckoning towards pensions should apply to them. Sir George Chesney consulted the Secretary of State for India, and he afterwards informed the students that those rules would be applied to them. There was a certain amount of delay in carrying out that promise, but they were accustomed to delays, especially in matters which required the application of public money and considerable correspondence.

In the year 1876 the engineers in India from Cooper's Hill brought their grievances before the President of the College, and he went into the matter and promised that their claims should be considered. He consulted the Secretary of State for India, and the order was given that furlough should reckon towards pension. There was, therefore, the question remaining of increased pay and the advantage of leaving the service after twenty-five years instead of after thirty years service at a higher pension. What was the view taken in the Viceroy's letter as to that? Although it might be to the advantage of some individuals to leave the service earlier than they would otherwise do, it might not be to the advantage of all of them. When he claimed his pension a man would probably be about fifty or fifty-five years of age. Hon. Members would realise that a man at that age in the public service would be likely to have a period of exceptional expense upon him, and this would perhaps be more so in the Indian service than in any other service, because a man in the Indian service would not be likely to marry so soon as an individual living in this country. The age he had mentioned was just about the time of life when a married man was fitting out his family for the work before them, and it was a period, therefore, when there was a very heavy strain put upon his finances. It might very well be that many individuals who would not wish to retire just at that time of life would strain every nerve to go on with their work so as to have as large an income as possible to meet the heavy expenditure at that period of their lives. That point was fully recognised in the Viceroy's letter, which stated that—

"So far as the men of the year 1874 were concerned, it may be observed that the concession then proposed only amounted to permission to retire a few months earlier than they could have done otherwise. It is true that in forwarding their applications we supported them on the ground that the promotion which it had been found possible to give them had been far worse than that which they had been led to expect when they entered the college; but we did not suppose that the offer of the special terms proposed to the officers of the years concerned, who might be willing to accept them, would satisfy the claims of other men of these and of later years who had suffered from retarded promotion."

There was more evidence in the letter, but he did not think he need read any more to make it clear that the Viceroy differentiated between the claims of those men who suffered from retarded promotion, because they wanted to go on with the service and get the income rather than retire. There was another aspect of the question. Would it be to the advantage of India that civil servants should retire when in full possession of their powers, and able to do good service for the Government of India? Some of those who accepted pensions at an earlier period had come home and done eminent service as civil engineers, and although they were delighted to have their services in this country, they were a great loss to India, and it might be that India had suffered thereby. The Viceroy, in his dispatch, balanced very carefully the advantages and disadvantages in the case of these men, and he went into an elaborate series of calculations, showing the probable losses sustained. He summed up the whole situation by endeavouring to consider whether it was possible to make out the case of each man by elaborate sums showing what each individual could have lost by the slow promotion in the service, and he believed their claims would be amply satisfied if, instead of basing the compensation calculations as to the losses by retarded promotion, the India Office would consent to pay them their pension at 2s. per rupee, instead of 1s. 9d. The House would remember that although the Viceroy did not recommend that that proportion of their appeal should be accepted on its merits, he did allude to the fact that hopes were held out to them that the profession of engineers at Cooper's Hill College should be put on a par with the other Indian service, and that entailed that their pensions would be paid in sterling, and not according to the fluctuating value of the rupee.

The points which he had endeavoured to lay before the House were, in the first place, that the terms held out in the prospectus, and the terms held out in the leaflet which they knew was attached, and which there were grounds for believing was as official as the prospectus itself, were not fulfilled. Those men went out to India to give their services in a tropical climate, and they had not got what they hoped to get when they entered the service. In the second place, the Indian Government had considered their memorial and had made a favourable report in regard to it. He did not wish in any way to blame the noble Lord the Secretary of State for India for not accepting the suggestions thrown out. He knew it was the duty of the Secretary of State for India to rigidly guard all the interests of the Empire. At a time when economy seemed to be so much in vogue, not only on the Opposition side but also upon the Ministerial Benches, one could not blame the Secretary of State for India for endeavouring to fulfil that obvious duty. But the servants of the Civil Service in India were just as much the public servants of this country as any other, and although the Secretary of State was the guardian of the national purse those servants had a right to lay their grievances before the House of Commons, just as much as any other individual in the British Empire. All they asked for was that a Select Committee should be appointed to consider the grievances alleg d, just as a Select Committee was appointed in 1890 to inquire into the condition of the Indian Civil Service, although that Committee did not inquire into the particular grievances which he had endeavoured to lay before the House. If this Committee were appointed and agreed with the view taken by the Secretary of State, the hands of the Government would be strengthened. If the Committee decided in favour of the recommendation of the Viceroy the situation would be ended, and he did not think any blame would thereby attach to the Secretary of State for India for refusing to accept the Viceroy's suggestion. He did not think any slight could be put upon the noble Lord by any decision the proposed Committee could arrive at. It would be an independent Committee whose decision would be looked upon as final by those who had signed the memorial to the Viceroy.

When the Under-Secretary of State for India introduced the proposal for the Cooper's Hill College, in 1871, he held out glowing prospects of what he expected the engineers would do. He told the House how they would be able to build railways, construct a network of canals throughout the country, and reclaim tracts of desert land. He believed those men had fulfilled every expectation which the Under-Secretary of State for India then indulged in. He believed that their work had been a blessing to India and a credit to themselves and this country. Surely it was a most unsatisfactory state of things that amongst men who had done such good work for so many years in the public service there should be this dissatisfaction, grounded simply on the non-fulfilment of prospects held out to them when they entered the service. That must be an unsatisfactory condition of things in any public service, and, as a mere matter of policy, surely it would be better that those grievances should be investigated by an independent Committee, so that an end might be put to them. These men should be treated with absolute justice, and he thought the matter could only be settled by being referred to an impartial tribunal. He begged to move the Motion standing in his name.

SIR SEYMOUR KING (Hull, Central) said he rose to second the Motion, and, in doing so, he wished to protest against this question being decided by the pressure of the Party Whip. Surely, if there was one thing that the civil servants of the Crown were entitled to, it was to look to the House of Commons as their ultimate Court of Appeal. They were not making any attack upon the noble Lord the Secretary of State for India, or the Government, but they were asking simply for the appointment of an impartial tribunal to arbitrate between the Secretary of State for India and his Viceroy. Surely that was a matter upon which it was hardly necessary to call in the power of the Government Whips. Of course they would have to submit to the inevitable, and all they could do was to put before the House of Commons and the country the case as it appeared to them. They were convinced of the merits and justice of the case which they were putting before the

House. He would sum up the case under three heads. First of all they maintained that the Viceroy and his Council were correct in the view they took that the claims of these Senior Cooper's Hill Engineers were at any rate justifiable; in other words that promises of promotion had been made and hopes held out which had never been fulfiled. Secondly, they maintained that the improved terms spoken of were absolutely illusory in meeting or satisfying the grievances of these men. And thirdly, they contended that the suggestion of the Viceroy and his Council was an extremely moderate proposition, and a very small grant in satisfaction of the claims which had been put forward. They thought this was a proposition which ought to have been accepted by the Secretary of State for India, who had put forward grounds which they considered were erroneous, and based upon a misapprehension of the facts. One thing which seemed to him to stand out most, after a careful reading of the papers connected with this case, was how little personal investigation the various Secretaries of State had given to the matter, for they appeared to have always accepted the statements brought before them by their permanent officials.

As regarded his first point, he thought it had been established by the very able and clear speech of his hon. and gallant friend the Member for Hornsey. The hon. and gallant Member had given admirable reasons for the basis upon which these claims rested, and he had dealt with the inducements held out in the prospectus and the leaflet. In consequence of the non-fulfilment of these promises many excellent men had left the Indian service. In this respect he might mention the resignation of Sir Alexander Binnie, who resigned on account of the treatment he received. What a loss to the Government of India that was, and all because the system of promotion showed that he had little to hope for by remaining in the Indian service. Did they mean to tell him that this feeling originated except from some real and deep grievance? Was it simply a question of a lot of men going together, because they wanted something better than they had got? Nothing of the sort. These men were transfused with the idea that they had been ill-treated. He had studied this question for years, and he could not understand how his noble friend had arrived at the conclusion that these men had not been grievously wronged, and that, therefore, they were not entitled to compensation. Sir George Chesney, who knew as much about the matter as his noble friend, and who had been interested in it from beginning to end, said:—

> "Never was there such a block in any branch of the public service. If reference be made to the prospect held out to the men in the college prospectus from year to year, I think it must be admitted that faith has not been kept with them. I submit that every fair-minded man will recognise that there has been a clear breach of faith."

In view of these statements would any representative of the India office get up in this House and attempt to justify the following, which was contained in a despatch from the Secretary of State for India to the Viceroy—

> "And I desire to add, for the instruction of your Excellency's Government, that these two petitions and the recommendations which you have felt yourself bound to make concerning them, illustrate forcibly the grave inconvenience of the course followed by your Government in dealing with this matter."

The petitions were from two poor widows, whose husbands had died in the service of their country—one from cholera when on foreign service, and one when engaged on irrigation works. It really was too absurd and vexatious that the Viceroy and his Council should dare to re-examine claims already adjudicated upon by the India Office, and submit the latter to the "grave inconvenience" of having to justify itself in public for rejecting demands which the Indian Government thought ought, in justice and mercy, to be reconsidered. The view he was urging was not a prejudiced view of an individual. It was not the view of an outsider or of a privileged class. It was the view of the Government of India itself, the employer of those men. What the House of Commons was now asked to do was to appoint a Select Committee to say whether the view of the Government of India, which was on the spot and knew all the circumstances of these men's careers, was correct, or whether the armchair politicians at home knew more about the matter than the Viceroy of India.

He passed on to the India Office view that these claims were wiped out by the improved rates of pension which had been given. He did not deny that improvements had been made in the service. If improvements had not been made they would have had no more recruits coming forward. It was a necessity of the situation to make some improvements in the service. All he would say on that point was that every one of these advantages was taken into consideration in the elaborate examination made by the Government of India, and at the end a large debit balance was brought in against the Government of India. Briefly, he might say that the advantages were of a two-fold character. There were advantages with regard to the amount of pay and the amount of pension. So far as the pay was concerned, it was nothing approaching what these men were entitled to on the expectations which were held out to them. As to pensions, the improvements which had been made were fully and thankfully recognised by these men, but they said they did not wish to leave the service for which they had paid high fees to qualify, and which they entered because of the high pay which, alas! they had never received. The compensation offered by the Government of India was moderate. It was suggested as a final settlement of all questions that the pensions should be paid at the rate of 2s. per rupee instead of 1s. 9d. The average pension of these men was something like 5000 rupees, so that 3d. per rupee on this would mean £62 10s. a year. He had taken a good deal of pains to investigate this matter. In the case of Harrington he had calculated that he had been paid 67,804 rupees short of what he would have received if promises had been kept. Was that nothing to be considered? The Government of India made the average loss 22,000 to 25,000 rupees. As to the number of men affected by this matter, there were 198 at the beginning; forty had died, two having committed suicide; twenty-eight retired in 1893, and fifteen in 1899, and there were 115 left. The cost of the increase, therefore, amounted to only £7,187. At the maximum it would not be more than £10,000, which would be reduced as the men died off. That would be a small amount to pay for the removal of the ill-feeling prevailing, and in satisfaction of an admitted and long-standing grievance. One of the reasons stated for not granting the claim was the very great length of time it had been before the House of Commons. His noble friend said that there must be finality somewhere. He said that his predecessor decided the matter in 1895. But he was afraid that his predecessor had hardly applied his intellect to a deep consideration of the subject, judging by a letter he signed. He could only suppose that the right hon. Gentleman never read the papers himself, for he wrote as follows—

> "The causes of the evils from which the memorialists represent that they suffer, are the fall in exchange and the slow rate of promotion in the Department. There is nothing in the representations of these officers that was not brought to the notice of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, who reported upon the alleged grievances of the Uncovenanted Civil Servants in July, 1890, and various measures have been passed by your Government with a view to alleviating the evils resulting from the fall in exchange, and to removing the block of promotion in the Department. I am unable to see any ground in the representation contained in the memorials now forwarded for according exceptional treatment under these heads to the petitioners."

He was himself a member of the Select Committee, and, therefore, he happened to know what passed. So far from the statement being accurate that the claims were before them, the fact was that they were never considered by the Committee. An attempt was made to bring them before the Committee, but his right hon. friend the Member for Cambridge University, who was Chairman, interposed at once, and said it was not within the competence of the Committee to deal with them, and, accordingly, he ruled them out. There was never any further attempt to bring them before the Committee. This showed how little Secretaries of State looked into matters for themselves, and how much they depended on the letters put before them for signature.

While on this point he must draw attention to another and most serious matter. One of the most important documents bearing on the question was withheld —he did not say deliberately withheld— from the Committee. He referred to the Public Works despatch of January 28, 1890. It was not included in the papers which were laid before the Committee. Of course his noble friend was in no way responsible for that, because he was not at the India Office then. But his noble friend was not justified in saying that it would have made no difference, and would not have seriously affected the judgment of the Committee. He could say with certainty that if the despatch with the relative minute had been before the Committee they should have been inclined to recommend the 2s. rupee for the engineers of that year. That despatch was totally unknown to the Committee, and it was not till 1896 that by an accident Sir George Chesney's minute was obtained. That document impressed the Indian Government, as was evidenced by the correspondence. They said—

> "It has, however, been represented that the omission of the Select Committee to make any special recommendations in their favour should not be regarded as decisive, because it appears from the answer given by your Lordship to a question asked in Parliament by Mr. Kimber on the 7th of August last that our Public Works Despatch, No. 15, dated January 28, 1890, to which Sir George Chesney's minute was appended, was not included among the papers laid before the Committee. We think that, if these important papers were not laid before the Committee, it may fairly be contended by the memorialists that the fact that the Special Committee did not make any special recommendation on their behalf should not be regarded as in itself precluding a further examination of their claims to a payment of pensions at a higher rate of exchange than that which was proposed as a minimum by the Committee, and we recommend therefore that this prayer should be considered by your Lordship on its merits."

Repeated efforts had been made since 1896 to obtain the production of this despatch, and repeatedly the request had been refused. This despatch very largely destroyed a good deal of the argument in the letter of his noble friend. On the question of the famous leaflet the hon. Member said, that after all it was on this that the claim for compensation was largely based. Was or was not that leaflet issued with the authority of the India Office? The Secretary of State said that no trace existed in the records of the India Office of the leaflet, and that it was impossible to say by whom or under what authority it was issued. He did not know how the records of the India Office were kept, but it seemed mysterious that no file was kept of the prospectuses or leaflets which were issued by that office.

*THE UNDER-SECRETARY FOR INDIA (Earl PERCY, Kensington, S.): The Secretary of State said there was no record in the office of this particular leaflet.

SIR SEYMOUR KING said he knew that the leaflet was drawn up by Sir George Chesney and issued under the authority of the Secretary of State. He was quite certain that his noble friend would not dispute the credibility of Sir George Chesney as a witness. He was one of the most accurate of men.

*EARL PERCY: Nobody has ever denied that the prospectus was issued by authority, but what the Secretary of State said was that there was no record of the leaflet.

SIR SEYMOUR KING said the minute of Sir George Chesney distinctly declared such a statement was attached to the prospectus, and from personal knowledge he knew it was the leaflet in question. How different had been the treatment of the covenanted service of the North-West Provinces when there was a block of promotion in 1882. The difference between what they were receiving and what they were led to expect was paid to them in cash. That was exactly the claim these public works gentlemen were making at the present time. A few years ago he heard the noble Lord say in the House that the Government were bound to keep faith with those whom they employed, and that they had no right to wriggle out of an engagement by the ambiguity of the language employed in making it. In this case ambiguity of language had given rise to expectations which had not been realised. The Government of India had expressed in the clearest manner their opinion as to what should be done, and if his noble friend still thought that they were in error, he entreated him to submit the question to the decision of a Select Committee of this House—the most impartial tribunal in the world—and by the decision of that Committee they would abide.

Motion made, and Question put, "That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the grievances alleged by the

Senior Cooper's Hill Engineers, now belonging to the Public Works Department of India, to exist as a consequence of their promotion and emoluments falling short of the expectations held out to them when they entered the service."—(*Captain Balfour.*)

*EARL PERCY said that his hon. friends who had moved and seconded the Motion seemed to be under the impression that his noble friend the Secretary of State for India was prejudiced on this question. In that they were mistaken. It was recognised that this was a case which excited naturally a great deal of sympathy, and his hon. friends were therefore fully justified in bringing it before the House. He congratulated his hon. friend the Member for Hornsey on the great ability he had shown in working up his case, and the extremely temperate language in which he had presented it to the House. He was not quite sure that he could pay a like compliment to his hon. friend the Member for Hull. The hon. Gentleman said that he did not wish to express any lack of confidence in his noble friend the Secretary of State for India, but he then proceeded to endorse the view of the memorialists that successive Secretaries of State, including his noble friend, had been guilty of breach of faith.

SIR SEYMOUR KING said he must correct the noble Lord. He had never accused the Secretary of State for India of breach of faith; he had simply quoted Sir George Chesney.

*EARL PERCY said that anyone who read the circular which had been sent to Members of this House must have been under the impression that the Government of India had given a general support to all the claims of the engineers, that they took the same view as Sir George Chesney—that the Secretary of State had committed a breach of faith, and that the Secretary of State had repeatedly refused even to reconsider the case at all. Not one of these statements had the slightest foundation. So far from refusing a reconsideration of the case—and of course it was not to be taken as the same thing as a reversal of a previous decision—the Secretary of State had, as a matter of fact, taken the trouble to go into every one of the grievances, including those which had been before previous Secretaries of State, and the Select Committee, and to state at length his reasons why he did not think fit to grant the claims put forward by the memorialists. The Government of India, too, actually repudiated two of the claims, and did not give an unconditional support to the others. They said in the most express terms that their purpose was only to state the case for the information of the Secretary of State. The view which the Government of India took about the compensation which these men ought to receive was entirely conditional on the view of the Secretary of State as to the extent to which we were bound by certain pledges which were alleged to have been given. The claims which the Government of India supported conditionally were three in number. They rejected altogether the claim for compensation in respect of depreciation of currency. They did, however, ask for the reconsideration of the claim of these men to be allowed to draw their furlough pay in rupees at the exchange value of 2s. a rupee. Now, that concession was asked for and was voluntarily conceded by the Secretary of State to men who entered the college between 1870 and 1874, on the ground that they entered the college on the faith of a prospectus which stated that in reckoning furlough pay ten rupees would be taken as the equivalent of £1 sterling. That concession, therefore, was refused to men who were appointed subsequently to 1874.

The second claim, in favour of which the Government of India thought there might be something to be said, was the claim to have pensions paid in sterling at the equivalent of 2s. the rupee. That request was a very old one, and was rejected by the Select Committee of 1890, which was composed of many gentlemen of great ability and knowledge of India, including Lord Cromer, the right hon. Member for Cambridge University and his hon. friend who seconded this Motion. The rejection of the claim was based on the fact that all the prospectuses issued to candidates expressly stated that the pensions should be paid at the annual rate of exchange which prevailed in official transactions. The official rate of exchange in 1890 was 1s. 5d., and therefore the concession given by the Select Committee of 1890, that pensions should be paid at the rate of 1s. 9d. to the rupee, was a very considerable one. It was now suggested that the decision of that Committee ought to be reversed, or, at any rate, that the Secretary of State should re-consider it on the ground that the Committee had not before it the particular Memorandum written by Sir George Chesney. He himself did not admit that a private view, taken by a Government Official however eminent, on a question, not of a legal or equitable claim, but of public policy, would have necessarily affected the conclusion of the Committee in 1890. It was advisable, he thought, that this question should be finally settled once for all. With regard to the question of compensation for the failure of expectations which the Civil servants entertained as to rates of promotion that, in their view, were held out to them when they entered the service, that claim was put before the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton in 1895 when he was Secretary of State for India. That right hon. Gentleman rejected the claim on two grounds—1st, because it had been rejected by the Select Committee of 1890, and 2nd, on the far stronger ground that, since the grievance had been submitted to the Select Committee of 1890, there had been a thorough reorganisation of the grades in the Department with the view of removing the block to promotion. That re-organisation took place in 1893, and there was a further reorganisation of the Department in 1899 for the express purpose of removing the grievances of the men who were appointed between 1874 and 1876, who it was said did not obtain the same benefits from the former reorganisation as the men who entered the service in 1877. Even supposing that was the fact, would not that be true of any reorganisation scheme? It seemed to him that if some men who thought they benefited less from reorganisation, or who had not taken advantage of the terms offered to them, were to be entitled to come up and claim compensation therefor, no Secretary of State would reorganise his Department at all.

That reorganisation was for the express purpose of removing the grievances of the men who were appointed between 1874 and 1876. When the Secretary of State acceded to this claim in 1899 he stated, at the conclusion of his despatch to the Government of India, that it must be understood that the concessions then granted were a final settlement of any claim that might be made with regard to expectations of promotion. If nothing had been done to meet the grievances of these men, the logical course surely would have been to ask for the same kind of remedy which had always been applied to such grievances in the past, viz., favourable terms of retirement for the older men in order to improve the prospects of those remaining in the service. But that was not the present proposal of the memorialists. The Government of India had entered into an elaborate mathematical calculation as to the exact monetary difference between the rates of promotion the men had actually had and the rates to which they thought they were entitled when they entered the Department, and having arrived at the pecuniary result, they cut it down by one half. Instead of proposing a monetary grant to the extent of that one half from public funds they deprecated any such course, and recommended that they should go back on the decision of 1890, and that the men should be granted the privilege of drawing their pensions at the rate of 2s. sterling. They based this recommendation on the ground that, what the petitioners cared most about was not the promotion grievance, but the question of the payment of pensions in sterling which was rejected by the Committee of 1890. The Government did not admit the validity of the claim that had been raised at all, and they held that if they were to accept this proposed form of compensation it would be unfair as between the members of this particular department and all other branches of the services to whom the privilege was refused by the Select Committee, and it would be also unfair and unjust as between the members to whom the concession was given. The Government of India, although they proposed that the concession should be given to the men who were forced to retire owing to ill-health, also proposed that it should be withheld from the men who voluntarily retired. That was a most extraordinary proposition to lay down. A certain grievance was urged with regard to the block in promotion. The Secretary of State in order to meet it proposed a scheme of reorganisation. A certain number of men took advantage of it and were therefore to be excluded from any claim to subsequent compensation, while the men who did not take advantage of it were to be entitled to that compensation. Was not that suggesting that men who refused to accept concessions offered them were entitled to claim better conditions later on?

As to the claims which had been based on the existence of the leaflet, he said that he could not say more than had already been published in the correspondence laid before Parliament. The India Office had no knowledge of the leaflet; it was not issued with their authority, and they could not accept any responsibility for it. But that document did contain a definite warning, not very happily worded, it was true, that no solid expectations were to be based on the rates of promotion which had prevailed up to 1870. He hoped he had stated clearly the reasons why his noble friend could not accede to the appointment of a Select Committee. He trusted that the hon. Member who had brought forward this matter would think twice before he pressed it to a division. He founded the Motion avowedly on the precedent afforded by the appointment of the Select Committee in 1890. But there was no analogy between the Committee of 1890 and the one now proposed. The former Select Committee was appointed to examine into grievances of a general character affecting the whole class of uncovenanted civil servants, and in order to suggest a remedy which would have some chance of producing finality and contentment among the whole body. But this Committee was asked to be appointed to deal with the grievances alleged to exist in regard to one particular department of the public service, and in regard to only a certain number of individuals. The Select Committee of 1890 was appointed to investigate a fact beyond dispute, viz., the depreciation of the currency and the injury inflicted thereby; while the House was now asked to appoint a Select Committee to examine into a mere hypothesis, the validity of which even the Government of India did not assert, which they at home expressly denied, and which even if admitted would not justify the claims based upon it. The issue presented to the Committee of 1890 was an extremely complex and difficult one; whereas the issue in the present case was so extremely simple that the House of Commons was quite competent to decide it without the intervention of a Select Committee. The Committee of 1890 had to decide a question of general policy, but this Committee would be appointed to arbitrate between his noble friend and these officers. There was another reason he would like to put forward. The origin of the Select Committee of 1890 was a desire of the Government of India for a further inquiry by a Committee of that character. But the Government of India in this case not only did not desire such a reference, but they had expressed the opinion that whatever view his noble friend might pronounce should be final.

He would only add one word in conclusion. He did not agree with his hon. friend that this was a question that merely affected the Indian Civil Service. On the contrary, it was a question of far-reaching and vital importance for every public department. If any individual in the public service who had not received all the advantages he thought himself entitled to when he entered the service was to be allowed to come and ask for arbitration at the hands of a Select Committee of the House, a fatal blow would be struck at the authority and responsibility of the head of every department in this country. In this particular instance they would be striking a fatal blow at the responsibility of the Secretary of State for India. No class was less entitled to ask for a Committee of this kind than these Cooper's Hill Engineers. There was not one of their grievances which had not been submitted before it reached the Indian Council to the strictest and most impartial examination by two Committees of that Council — Committees composed of men who themselves had been eminent members of the Civil Service and who had every desire to deal justly with the claims of individuals and to do that which was most conducive to the interests of the service as a whole.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth) said he wished to put the matter on a somewhat higher ground than it had been placed on by the Mover and Seconder. He quite admitted the inconvenience which the noble Lord had pointed out of nominating a Select Committee, and he could easily understand that the Government could hardly assent to such a Motion. But here was a complaint of old standing; it had been advanced again and again during the last twenty years, and it had so impressed itself on the mind of the Viceroy of India that he had put it forwaards a matter which might be reconsidered. The noble Lord had no doubt been inadvertently inaccurate in saying that the Secretary of State for India had never refused to reconsider this question, for he would possibly recollect that three years ago in answer to a question put in the House, the Secretary of State said distinctly he could not re open the subject. Did not that mean that there was to be no reconsideration? He was prepared to admit that it would be extremely inconvenient, and a very bad precedent, to elect a Committee of the House to act as arbitrator between the Government and its employees, but surely this was essentially a case for reconsideration in the interests of the State itself. Yet it was refused.

*EARL PERCY: The Secretary of State not only did not refuse, but he published in great detail his reasons for coming to the same conclusion as he had done in his original despatch.

MR. KIMBER said he would like to know when the reconsideration was given to the matter. Undoubtedly in 1900 the noble Lord said he could not reopen the question, and if subsequently to that he reconsidered it, he certainly did not inform the House. No doubt the Committee of 1890 was appointed to advise the Government with regard to the general treatment of its employees, but it was admitted that an important despatch from the Government of India, including a letter of Sir George Chesney's, was never submitted to that Committee. He did think the case of a body of public servants who felt, rightly or wrongly, that their lives and careers were ruined, they having spent the flower of their days in a foreign climate, deserved some consideration. There was a sense of injury entertained by a loyal body of public servants who admittedly had admirably performed their duty to the State, and it was most detrimental to the service of the country that a state of things should prevail which left on their minds a feeling that their interests were not considered by their employers, and which produced a heartbreaking sense that they were forgotten, while they were serving their country so many thousands of miles from home. It was to the interest of the State, and it was to the interest of the service, so far as getting good men to join in the future was concerned, that this feeling should as soon as possible be dissipated. He would appeal to the noble Lord to reconsider the whole subject, not with a view to dealing with the claims of these officers as a matter of special pleading, or as to whether they had a legal right, but on principles of equity and liberality. It sounded very much like special pleading on the part of the noble Lord to endeavour to repudiate the letter of Sir George Chesney. It was true that the noble Lord was not responsible for not having found in the pigeon holes of the India Office a document which was there in the time of his predecessors. But the absence of such a document was not a ground why the Secretary of State should not receive evidence from outside of a reliable and credible character. No one could doubt the evidence of Sir George Chesney, a man of the highest repute, and once a Member of this House. The document was not forthcoming on this side, but it was found in India in the hands of one of the officers themselves; and was assumed by the Government of India to be a genuine document. It seemed to him unworthy of a great Department of State that it should take exception to evidence of that kind. He would appeal to the noble Lord to deal with these gentlemen in a spirit of liberality and equity, as entirely distinguished from the document, and to take the matter once more into consideration.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 50; Noes, 134. (Division List No. 52)

AYES.

Bayley, Thomas (*Derbyshire*)
Bell, Richard
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith
Brigg, John
Caldwell, James
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*
Davies, Alfred (*Carmarthen*)
Doogan, P. C.
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Duncan, J. Hastings
Evans, Saml. T. (*Glamorgan*)
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-
Hobhouse, RtHnH (*Somrst E*
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Johnstone, Heywood
Jones, Wm. (*Carnarvonshire*)
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir J. H.
Lambert, George
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leng, Sir John
Lough, Thomas
Markham, Arthur Basil
Maxwell, W. J. H. (*Dumfriessh.*
Rattigan, Sir William Henry
Remnant, Jas. Farquharson
Roberts, John Bryn (*Eifion*)
Rose, Charles Day
Samuel, Herbt. L. (*Cleveland*)
Sandys, Lt.-Col. Thos. Myles
Seely, Chas. Hilton (*Lincoln*)
Seely, Maj. J. E. B. (*Isle of Wight*
Seton-Karr, Sir Henry
Shackleton, David James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Soares, Ernest J.
Spencer, Rt Hn. C. R (*Northants*
Strachey, Sir Edward
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (*Oxf'd Univ*
Tennant, Harold John
Thomas, David A. (*Merthyr*)
Thomas, J. A. (*Glam., Gower*)
Tollemache, Henry James
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Wason, E. (*Clackmannan*)
Weir, James Galloway
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Wilson, John (*Durham, Mid*)

Tellers for the Ayes—
Captain Balfour and Sir Seymour King.

NOES.

Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Arrol, Sir William
Atkinson, Right Hon. John
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Bailey, James (*Walworth*)
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Man'r*
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (*Leeds*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bhownaggree, Sir M. M.
Bignold, Arthur
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Butcher, John George
Campbell, J. H. M. (*Dublin Univ*
Cautley, Henry Strother
Cavendish, V C W (*Derbysh.*)
Cecil, Evelyn (*Aston Manor*)
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Charrington, Spencer
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Colomb, Sir John Chas. Ready
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Cook, Sir Frederick Lucas
Corbett, A. Cameron (*Glasg.*)
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Craig, Charles Curtis (*Antrim, S*
Cranborne, Viscount
Crossley, Sir Savile
Dalkeith, Earl of
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Davenport, William Bromley
Denny, Colonel

Dimsdale, Rt. Hon. Sir Jos. C.
Disraeli, Coningsby Ralph
Doughty, George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Hart
Elibank, Master of
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Ed.
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S.W.*
Fyler, John Arthur
Galloway, William Johnson
Gibbs, HnA.G.H(*City of Lond*
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
Gordon, Hn.J.E.(*Elgin & Nrn*
Gore, HnG R.C.Ormsby-(*Salop*
Gray, Ernest (*West Ham*)
Greene, Hy. D. (*Shrewsbury*)
Groves, James Grimble
Hall, Edward Marshall
Halsey, Rt. Hon. Thomas F.
Hamilton, Rt Hn Ld.G.(*Midx*
Hanbury, Rt. Hn. Robt. Wm.
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Heath, Arthur H. (*Hanley*)
Heath, James (*Staffs., N.W.*)
Henderson, Sir Alexander
Hogg, Lindsay
Hoult, Joseph
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W.(*Salop*
Lambton, Hon. Fredk. Wm.
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*
Lawrence, Sir Jos. (*Monm'th*)
Lawson, John Grant
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Fredk. N. S.
Llewellyn, Evan Henry
Long, Rt. Hn. W. (*Bristol, S.*
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*
Macdona, John Cumming
Maconochie, A. W.
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
M'Iver, Sir Lewis (*Edinburgh W*
M'Killop, Jas. (*Stirlingshire*)
Majendie, James A. H.
Manners, Lord Cecil
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Mitchell, William (*Burnley*)
Montagu, G. (*Huntingdon*)
Morrell, George Herbert
Morrison, James Archibald
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Murray, Rt HnA Graham (*Bute*
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Percy, Earl
Pilkington, Colonel Richard
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Purvis, Robert
Randles, John S.
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (*Renfrew*
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Smith, H C. (*North'mb. Tyneside*
Smith, Jas. Parker (*Lanarks.*)
Stanley, Hon. A. (*Ormskirk*)
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Jn. M.
Sturt, Hn. Humphry Napier
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Tufnell, Lieut.-Col. Edward
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. William Hall
Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir W. H.
Whiteley, H. (*Ashton-u.-Lyne*)
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Williams, Colonel R. (*Dorset*
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (*Bath*)
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart
Wrightson, Sir Thomas

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

The Committee of Selection report, That they have discharged the following Member from the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure: Mr. Solicitor-General; and have added the following Member: Mr. Attorney-General.

Report to lie upon the Table.

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACT (1886) AMENDMENT BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. WEIR said that the object of the Bill was to bring a number of small tenants under the benefits of the Crofters Act. Under the Act of 1886 tenants holding under lease were excluded, although they were paying precisely the same rent as other tenants. That was a great grievance, which the Bill proposed to remove. He begged to move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. A. Graham Murray, Buteshire) said that the Bill was really of a more far reaching character than might be supposed from the hon. Gentleman's brief explanation.

SIR FREDRICK BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) called attention to the fact that forty Members were not present.

Notice taken that forty Members were not present; House counted, and forty Members not being present:

The House was adjourned at half-past Eleven of the Clock till To-morrow.

Adjourned at half after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 2nd April, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS.

The Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of Ways and Means.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz. :—

Local Government Provisional Order (Housing of the Working Classes) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time To-morrow.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, no Standing Orders are applicable, viz. :—

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time To-morrow.

East Ardsley Gas Bill; Winchester Water and Gas Bill. Read the third time, and passed.

PETITIONS.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Bedford; and Luton; to lie upon the Table.

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Muirkirk, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION IN THE METROPOLIS.

Petition from Poplar, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition of the Scottish Alliance for Temperance and Social Reform, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.

Petitions against establishment: from Paisley; Forfar; Ayr; and Brechin; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.

Petitions against: from Birmingham (two); Brentwood; Barking; Leamington; North Kensington; Shrewsbury; Bedford; Sheffield; Wellingborough (two); Kingston-upon-Hull; Lambeth; Mansfield; Folkestone; East Ham; Romford; Lincoln; Bolton; and Brierley Hill; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petition from Asbury, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 2947 to 2949 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

WORKHOUSE INFIRMARIES (IRELAND) (NUNS EMPLOYED).

Return ordered, "showing the number of Workhouse Infirmaries in Ireland in which nuns are employed in any capacity, showing for each Infirmary the number of nuns so employed and the amount paid to them by way of salaries within the last financial year."—(*Mr. Sloan.*)

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

TRADES DISPUTES.

Return ordered, " showing statistics of strikes and lock-outs in each of the ten years 1893–1902, in the following form :—

	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.
(1) Number and magnitude of Strikes and Lock-outs :—										
Number of Strikes and Lock-outs recorded										
Number of workpeople affected										
Aggregate duration in working days										
Average duration per head of estimated working population										
(2) Principal causes : —										
Percentage of workpeople directly affected by Strikes and Lock-outs due to the undermentioned causes :—										
Wages For advance										
Against reduction										
Other										
Total wages										
Hours of labour For decrease										
Against increase										
Other										
Total hours										
Employment of particular classes or persons										
Other causes										
Total										
(3) Results :—										
Percentage of workpeople directly affected by Disputes which resulted—										
In favour of employers										
In favour of workpeople										
In a compromise										
(4) Methods of Settlement :—										
(a) Number of Strikes and Lock-outs settled by—										
Arbitration										
Conciliation and mediation										
Mutual arrangement										
Other ways										
(b) Number of workpeople affected by Strikes and Lock-outs settled by—										
Arbitration										
Conciliation and mediation										
Mutual arrangement										
Other ways										
(5) Number of cases settled under Conciliation Act : —										
Disputes involving stoppage										
Disputes not involving stoppage										
Total										

(*Mr. Bell.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Bovine Tuberculosis Commission—Report.

Mr. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick) : To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he can state when the Report prepared by the Commission on Bovine Tuberculosis will be ready for circulation.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) I am afraid I have nothing to add to my reply to a similar Question by the hon. Member on Wednesday last.†

Metropolitan Asylums Board—Treatment of Imbecile Children.

Mr. FLOWER (Bradford, W.) : To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he is aware that the Metropolitan Asylums Board intend to place improvable imbecile children in future in the large institution of 2,000 beds at Darenth; and whether, seeing that hopeless imbeciles are also to be placed at Darenth, he will take steps to secure that the improvable children shall have careful medical supervision.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) Perhaps my hon. friend will refer to the reply which I gave on Tuesday to a Question on the same subject.†

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† See page 161.

Vaccination Act—Exemption Certificates.

Mr. RUNCIMAN (Dewsbury): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he can state how many certificates of exemption applied for by conscientious objectors under the Vaccination Act, 1899, have been refused by magistrates in each year respectively since the Act came into operation.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) I have no information showing the number of cases in which certificates of conscientious objection to vaccination have been refused.

Tuberculosis—Seizure of Pigs.

Mr. FIELD: To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that a number of pigs have been seized in London lately and confiscated because of alleged tuberculosis; and whether he will take steps to prevent unnecessary seizures pending the issue of the Report of the Commission on Tuberculosis.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) My attention has been drawn to the seizure of carcases of pigs in London which show signs of tuberculosis. The Royal Commission which reported in 1898 recommended that "in view of the greater tendency to generalisation of tuberculosis in the pig . . . . the presence of tubercular deposit in any degree should involve seizure of the whole carcase and of the organs." Pending the Report of the Royal Commission which is now sitting, I am not prepared to advise local authorities to act otherwise than in accordance with this recommendation.

Holly Mount, Tottington, Poor Law Schools.

Mr. FLOWER: To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the Holly Mount, Tottington, Poor Law School has been re-certified; and, if so, will he state what changes, if any, have been made in the management of the school since the certificate was withdrawn.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) The answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. The schools have been placed under the management of a committee of seven, and the staff has undergone considerable changes. The mother superior, the general mistress, and the head schoolmistress, as well as a majority of the sisters, are English. Moreover, the dietary has been improved. Before granting the new certificate I imposed certain conditions as to the conduct of the schools to which the managers agreed.

Education Act—Schedule II. (22).

Mr. HENRY HOBHOUSE (Somersetshire, E.): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if the new local educational authorities will have, under the provisions of Schedule II. (22) of the Education Act, 1902, to credit school board parishes with a proportion of the first Parliamentary grants paid to the local education authority in respect of the former board schools; and if so, with what proportion.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) I am consulting the Law Officers of the Crown on certain financial questions arising on the Act, and I must ask leave to defer a reply to my hon. friend until their opinion has been received.

Education Grants.

Mr. GARDNER (Berkshire, Wokingham): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he can state the nature and extent of the assistance he proposes to provide to enable local education authorities to meet the deficiency in their first year's receipts from Government grants.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) The Board of Education have indicated the arrangements they are making for expediting the payments of the grants. Thus it is proposed that a large portion of the new aid grant should be paid to the local education authorities on or immediately after the appointed day, and that the remainder should be issued a few weeks later; and that the block grant, instead of being paid in one sum at the end of the school year, should be paid in quarterly instalments with the fee grant, so far as the Education Vote permits. Notwithstanding these arrangements there will, I fear, be cases where temporary assistance will be required, and I have in preparation a Bill to enable the local education authorities to borrow for the purpose.

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† See page 682.

Postmarks.

MR. TALBOT (Oxford University): To ask the Postmaster-General whether it has been brought to his notice that the dated postmarks being often used for obliterating purposes are so obscured by the postage stamps that it is difficult to discover the hour or day on which the letter was posted; and whether he can give instructions that the dated postmarks shall be kept distinct from the stamps, as is done already in some post offices.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) My attention has been directed to this matter, and I quite recognise the inconvenience caused by using the date stamp as an obliterator. I hope by degrees to largely increase the use of stamping machines with a date stamp separate from the obliterator, such as are already employed to a considerable extent in London.

Alleged Grievances of Welsh Sub-postmasters

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): To ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been directed to complaints from sub-postmasters in Wales with regard to the amounts of their pay and allowances; and whether he will consider the advisability of taking steps to remedy the alleged grievance.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) I can only call to mind one complaint of this nature. The sub-postmaster in question had committed the very serious offence of altering the name of the payee and the office of payment on three postal orders presented at his office. These orders had been stolen, and, as the sub-postmaster's action enabled the stolen orders to be cashed by the thief, the sub-postmaster was required to refund the 10s. In appealing against this decision he complained that his commission and allowances were inadequate. On a review of the facts I saw no reason for increasing his commission and I directed that he should be so informed.

Education of Deaf and Dumb.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether he proposes to introduce legislative proposals dealing with the education of the deaf and dumb, to which his attention was called last session by the deputation introduced by Earl Egerton of Tatton.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) The Board of Education are considering the advisability of introducing legislative proposals dealing with the education of the blind on the lines which were put before me last session by the deputation introduced by Earl Egerton of Tatton. I am not at present in a position to make any definite statement on the matter.

Education Act—Payment of Grants.

MR. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether the portion of grant falling due for the period between the end of the financial year of a non-provided school and the appointed day in accordance with Schedule 5 of the Education Act, 1902, will be paid to the managers immediately after the appointed day.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) The portion of Parliamentary grant payable to the managers of a school not provided by a local education authority, in respect of the period to the appointed day, will not be paid until after the close of the school year, when the full returns for the calculation of the grant are in the hands of the Board of Education.

Accidents in Shipyards.

MR. JOHN WILSON (Durham, Mid.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can say how many fatal and non-fatal accidents occurred in the shipyards in the United Kingdom in 1902, and the number of persons employed in the same employment during that year.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas.*) The number of accidents reported as having occurred in shipbuilding during 1902 was 10,987, of which 118 were fatal accidents. Of the non-fatal accidents 1,070 were reportable to the certifying surgeon, and 9,799 reportable to the inspector only. These figures do not include accidents in a few incidental industries—principally in sawmills—which are carried on in shipyards. The returns of persons employed during 1902 are not yet ready; but, according to the last available returns, there were 150,727 persons employed in shipyards.

Prisons Regulations—Aliens.

Mr. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will explain why, in the new order as to prisons, the instruction in trades and general education hitherto given to prisoners is in future to be withheld from alien prisoners; and whether any, and, if so, what, useful occupation is to be allowed for these prisoners in substitution for the instruction hitherto given.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas.*) If the hon. Member is referring to a paragraph which appeared yesterday in certain newspapers, I may inform him that the statement that there has been any new rule or order with regard to alien prisoners is entirely without foundation.

India—Import Duties on British Goods.

Sir JOHN ROLLESTON (Leicester): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether he will now consider the advisability of imposing Excise duties on other goods than cotton goods entering India, and of removing the protective effect of the import duties in the case of other British goods as well as cotton goods.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) As I stated in my answer to a similar Question asked by my hon. friend on the 13th March, 1902, I can hold out no hope of imposing such Excise duties as are suggested.†

India—Treatment of Rabies.

Colonel LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether the Indian Government have any Reports affording a comparison between the results of the inoculations at the Pasteur Institute at Kasauli and those in the treatment of rabies by the vapour baths, appliances for which have already been supplied; and, if so, will he lay them upon the Table.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) I have not received any Reports on the subject from the Government of India, but I will ascertain from the Viceroy whether any information is available.

Transvaal—Taxation of the Mines Rebatements.

Mr. BROOKE ROBINSON (Dudley): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in assessing for taxation the mines in the Transvaal, a deduction is to be allowed in respect of the exhaustion of the mine; and, if so, whether in the next Budget he will afford the same privilege to the mines in this country, which are at present assessed on the gross profits without any deduction in respect of exhaustion.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) By the Transvaal law, in estimating the profits of a gold mine for the purpose of the special tax imposed thereon, an allowance is made for the exhaustion of the capital actually expended on the development of the mine, the allowance being the yearly amount which, if accumulated at 3 per cent. compound interest for the estimated life of the mine, would replace the capital at the end of that period. I think this allowance is different in principle from an allowance in respect of the exhaustion of the mine itself, which is what the hon. Member suggests.

Education—Irish and Scotch Equivalent Grants.

Mr. O'MARA (Kilkenny, S.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will state the principle and give the computation by which the amounts of the Irish and Scotch equivalent grants are obtained, with reference to the Education Act, 1902.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) The estimated net amount of the additional grant in England under the Education

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† See (4) *Debates*, civ. 1266.

Act, 1902, for 1903–4, on the assumption that a full and normal year's provision was required, would be £1,352,000. Scotland and Ireland are to receive grants of £186,000 and £185,000 a year respectively, these sums being the proportionate amounts reckoned on the population of each country compared with that of England, according to the last census. In the case of Scotland there has been included in the general aid grant a further sum of £26,000 for the year, or £13,000 for the half-year, which was guaranteed in 1897 by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in order to maintain the fee grant in Scotland at 12s. a head.

Naval Schoolmasters.

MR. YOXALL: To ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether the schoolmasters in the Navy whose position, etc., is now under consideration include those who hold only the rank of chief petty officer; and whether, seeing that, while Army schoolmasters receive promotion to warrant rank after eight years' service and schoolmasters in Marine schools after twelve years' service, schoolmasters in the Royal Navy receive no such promotion by period of service, he can take steps to give similar promotion to naval schoolmasters.

(*Answered by Mr. Pretyman*). All naval schoolmasters are chief petty officers, head schoolmasters are warrant officers. The reply to the second part of the hon. Member's Question is that the conditions of the naval service do not admit of the system of promotions suggested in the Question being adopted.

The "Caledonia" Training Ship.

MR. J. H. LEWIS (Flint Boroughs): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether, in view of the fact that His Majesty's ship "Caledonia," the boys' training ship in the Forth, has been recently condemned for the second time as unfit for further service, and of the danger to the boys on board involved in leaving this ship any longer in commission in her present condition, he will state when the decision to transfer the boys to corrugated iron huts to be erected on shore will be carried into effect; and whether this is a permanent arrangement; and what means will be adopted until such arrangements are carried out to safeguard the lives of those on board the "Caledonia."

(*Answered by Mr. Pretyman.*) The "Caledonia" is not in a dangerous condition, and will be fit for occupation until the shore establishment is erected. This establishment will be of a permanent character. The buildings will not be of corrugated iron, but of a more sanitary and durable material, probably brick with tile roof. Negotiations are now in progress for a site, and it is hoped that the transfer to the shore may be effected within two years.

Preparation of Jurors' Lists—Scale of Remuneration.

MR. O'MALLEY (Galway, Connemara): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to the fact that county secretaries entrusted with the preparation of the jurors' list, under Section 83 (7) of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898, have charged an initial fee of £10 for each rural district in their county, and that in the case of unions overlapping two or three counties, this expense has increased from £10 per union heretofore to £30 per union in the case of a union overlapping three counties, and to £20 per union in the case of a union overlapping two counties; and whether, in view of the Resolutions passed by the Boards of Guardians last year on the subject, he will consider the advisability of repealing this Sub-section.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) I am not aware whether the practice is as stated in the Question. The scale of remuneration is fixed by an Order issued by the Lord-Lieutenant in Council. If any alteration in the scale is considered necessary it can be effected by an amendment of the Order in Council, without legislation.

Local Government Board Appointments for Poor Law Officers.

MR. O'MALLEY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in filling up vacancies on the staff of inspectors and auditors of the Local Government Board, he will consider the advisability, in view of the request of the Poor Law Association of Ireland and the Boards of Guardians of Ireland, of giving a share of such appointments to Poor Law officers.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) In filling vacancies on its staff the Local Government Board proceeds on the principle of selecting the persons whom it considers best qualified for these positions.

Bequest of the late James Murphy.

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Cork Co., N.E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can explain why the Commissioners of Charitable Donations and Bequests for Ireland have refused to take any steps to obtain from the trustees of the estate of the late James Murphy a sum of £50, demised in 1895 to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Michelstown, although the Commissioners have been furnished with the information they required and sufficient assets are available; and, if not, if he will inquire into this matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) I have referred this matter to the Commissioners, who inform me that they did not consider the case was one calling for their intervention. I may add that the Government has no authority to question the action of the Commissioners.

Irish Land Bill—Suggested Drainage Scheme.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to the fact that the overflow of the River Shannon has flooded miles of country from Carrick-on-Shannon to Portumna; and whether, in view of the neglect of arterial drainage in the past, he will consider the advisability of introducing in the new Land Bill a clause enabling a complete drainage system of the country to be set up either by districts or counties or both.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) I cannot undertake to overload the Land Bill by introducing into it proposals for dealing with the question of arterial drainage, which is a large one in itself.

Boyle Union—Cost of Printing and Advertising.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the cost of the printing and advertising bill of Boyle Union, Boyle No. 1 District Council, and Boyle No. 2 District Council, for the three years ending 31st March, 1900, 31st March, 1901, and 31st March, 1902, respectively; and whether, seeing that for some of these years no contract for supplying these articles existed, no bonds were perfected, and no tenders were regularly taken, the attention of the auditor will be called to these proceedings.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*)

	Year ended 31st March.								
	1900.			1901.			1902.		
Boyle Union :—	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Printing . .	6	18	0	17	19	0	11	12	4
Books and Forms .	70	17	3	36	2	2	30	15	3
Advertisements .	23	11	0	42	17	0	41	18	8
Boyle No. 1 District :—									
Printing . .	6	17	1	15	19	1	11	12	4
Books . . .	30	12	4	9	19	3	3	8	0
Advertisements .	23	11	0	42	17	0	41	18	8
Boyle No. 2 District :—									
Printing . .	3	16	3	3	8	0	3	2	0
Books . . .	30	0	7	11	19	7	8	15	10
Advertisements .	51	9	0	116	17	9	80	10	7

The printing in each case was done according to contract, but no bond, I am informed, was perfected as the contract was considered too small. It is open to any person interested to appear before the auditor on the occasion of his audit of the accounts of these bodies and lodge an objection to any item to which he takes exception.

Irish Valuation Returns.

MR. BUCHANAN (Perthshire, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will give a summary from the Irish Valuation Returns of the total valuation of land in Ireland, of the valuation of land held in demesne, in tenancy, and in grazing farms.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The total valuation of land in Ireland is £9,065,000. There is no official information available showing the distribution of this land under the headings mentioned.

Ireland—Inquiries under the Labourers Acts.

MR. GILHOOLY (Cork Co., W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord

Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the clauses in the Land Purchase Bill referring to agricultural labourers in Ireland, he will lay upon the Table of the House the general reports of the Local Government Board inspectors for Ireland on all inquiries held under the Labourers Acts within the eighteen months ended the 31st March last.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The recommendations in the reports of the inspectors are communicated to the local authorities, but the reports otherwise are confidential documents, made for the information of the Board, and could not be published as suggested.

Education—Irish Equivalent Grant.

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any, and, if so, how much, money was allocated to Ireland, and when and in what manner, as Ireland's equivalent for the grants made to England out of the Imperial purse under 33 and 34 Vic., c. 75, Section 9, as amended by 60 and 61 Vic., c. 16; and whether any, and, if so, how much, money was allocated to Ireland, and when and in what manner, as Ireland's equivalent for the grants made to England out of the Imperial purse under the Voluntary Schools Act, 60 and 61 Vic., c. 5, Section 1.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The answer is in the negative in both cases.

MR. CALDWELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, having regard to the fact as borne on the Education Estimates for England, that England, in lieu of the grants under the Acts of 1870 and 1897, is to receive under the Education Act of 1902 half a year's grant amounting to £1,100,000, or at the rate of £2,200,000 a year, he will explain on what basis Ireland is only to receive as an equivalent an annual fixed sum of £185,000, and state how much Ireland would have been entitled to receive on the principle of nine-hundredth parts of the probate duty under The Probate Duties (Scotland and Ireland) Act, 1888.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The estimated net amount of the additional grant in England under the Education Act, 1902, for 1903-4, on the assumption that a full and normal year's provision were required, would be £1,352,000. The proportionate amount for Ireland reckoned on the population of the two countries according to the last census works out to £185,000. Nine-eightieths of £1,352,000 would, of course, be £152,100.

War Gratuity for Kimberley Town Guard.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL GEORGE KEMP (Lancashire, Heywood): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that members of the Kimberley Town Guard who served throughout the siege of Kimberley did not receive the war gratuity, he will take steps to grant it to them.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) It was decided on the advice of Lord Kitchener that the war gratuity was not issuable to persons who were not employed with Imperial troops beyond the borders of their own colonies, and it is not possible to break the rule in favour of the Kimberley Town Guard.

Army Schools—Denominational Teaching.

MR. YOXALL: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that in Army schools Nonconformist teachers are required to give, and the children of Nonconformist parents to receive, instruction in books written with reference to the distinctive formularies of the Established Church; and whether he will issue orders that the use of such books shall be confined to the scholars belonging to the denomination concerned, and to the hours during which facilities are given, under paragraph 1,315 of the King's Regulations, to chaplains and officiating clergymen; and that at examinations of candidates for appointment as teachers in Army schools questions upon the text of any manual issued by or from a denominational society may cease to be set.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) It is not clear to what instruction the hon. Member refers. There would appear to be no objection to his suggestions, but it would be preferable if he would explain in a detailed communication to the War Office the specific points at issue.

Army Clothing Factory—Fair Wage Resolution.

MR. TALBOT: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will take steps to secure the observance of the Fair Wage Resolution in the case of the women employed at the Army Clothing Factory in altering Royal Artillery uniforms into those worn by the Militia; and whether he will state what their remuneration is.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) The operation referred to consists in putting on a new collar and using cord instead of braid. The payment made is 1s. 2d. This is considered a fair remuneration considering the time occupied.

South African War—Compensation Claims.

MR. CARVIL (Newry): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that the claims of individuals in respect of depredations by the Boers or of property commandeered by the late Transvaal Government during the war have been paid in whole or in part, while the claims of companies as such have been repudiated *in toto*; and whether, seeing that the shares in these companies are owned in the main by British subjects, he can take steps to have this difference set aside; and will he say whether any, and if so, what distinction is drawn between companies registered in England and those of the Transvaal.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain.*) These payments are being made as an act of grace, and without admitting any liability. The object which the Government has had in view in making such payments is to assist individual loyalists who have suffered direct losses during the war, in the same way as assistance is being given to Boers under the terms of surrender. Acting on this principle, claims from companies and large firms have not been entertained, and no distinction has been drawn between companies registered in England and those registered in the Transvaal.

Housing of the Working Classes Bill—Date of Introduction.

DR. MACNAMARA (Camberwell, N.): To ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he can now say when the Bill to deal with certain matters affecting the housing of the working classes will be introduced.

(*Answered by Mr. A. J. Balfour.*) I hope my right hon. friend the President of the Local Government Board will be able to introduce this Bill shortly after Easter.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Thursday Island Coaling Station.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Imperial coaling station of Thursday Island is inspected by or under the orders of Major-General Sir Edward Hutton, commanding the Federal Forces of Australia; and, if so, whether he has received any official reports showing that the garrison has been brought up to establishment strength.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Lord STANLEY, Lancashire, Westhoughton): The Commonwealth of Australia is responsible for the provision of the *personnel* of the garrison of Thursday Island, and any reports by the General Officer Commanding concerned would be addressed to the Commonwealth Government. The latest returns which have been forwarded on for the information of the War Office do not show any reduction in the *personnel* of the garrison.

Recruiting Regulations.

MR. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, with a view to securing that no man shall now be enlisted under the age of eighteen years, he will consider the advisability of amending the attestation paper by placing before the recruit his liability to punishment for a false answer as to age; of carrying into practice Sections 33, 34, and 99 of the Army Act; and of the addition of a question, asking for an opinion as to age, to Army Forms B 64 and 97, as well as forwarding these forms whenever practicable to the School Board under whom the recruit was schooled.

*LORD STANLEY: I am desired by my right hon. friend to say that as regards the liability to punishment, his legal advisers inform him that conviction for making a false statement as to age cannot be held good unless the man pleads guilty, or the prosecution proves that he knew his correct age, a man's actual age not being a matter within his personal knowledge. The suggested amendment to the attestation papers would not therefore appear advisable. As regards Army Forms B 64 and 97, information as to the age of the recruit is already stated on them. Reference to the School Boards for their opinion would throw an immense amount of labour on the School Boards without any certain result.

MR. PIRIE: What steps have been taken to give effect to the Resolution passed by the House on this subject.

*LORD STANLEY: My right hon. friend has stated them already.

MR. PIRIE: No.

Soldiers Discharged in South Africa.

SIR THOMAS DEWAR (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state how many soldiers have been discharged in South Africa up to the present time; and how many of these men have joined the South African Constabulary.

*LORD STANLEY: The number of men discharged in South Africa up to the 31st December, 1902, the latest date up to which we have got information, was 8,855. I am not aware how many of these men have joined the South African Constabulary.

Medals for Tientsin Volunteers.

MR. YERBURGH (Chester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the officers and men of the Tientsin Volunteer Corps, who served at and about Tientsin during the months of June and July, 1900, have notified His Britannic Majesty's Consul at Tientsin that they decline to accept the medal China, 1900, now offered to them because the bar for the relief of Peking has been refused to them; and whether, in view of the services rendered by these Volunteers, he will authorise the grant to this corps of the relief of Peking bar with the Chinese medal.

*LORD STANLEY: Will the hon. Member kindly refer to my right hon. friend's reply to a Question put by the hon. Member for South Aberdeen on the 27th ultimo. He will find the bar has been granted.†

Forth Division Volunteer Royal Engineers.

MR. YERBURGH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that the mine fields between Kinghorn and Leith are laid by and under the control of the Forth Division Volunteer Royal Engineers, Submarine Miners, and that the officer commanding this corps holds the position of French Consul at Leith; and, if so, will he consider the advisability of preventing knowledge of such a character being in the possession of a gentleman who acts as Consul to a foreign power.

*LORD STANLEY: My right hon. friend is aware of the fact stated in the Question and the necessary action is under consideration.

Prevention of Illegal Trawling.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he will state what gunboats, tonnage and speed of same, are provided by the Admiralty for the purpose of enforcing the law against the depredations of poaching trawling companies.

*THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER, Belfast, W.): The following vessels are at present available for fishery duty—The "Hearty," Special Service Vessel, 1,300 tons, 12½ knots speed; The "Jackal," Special Service Vessel, 750 tons, 11¾ knots speed; The "Alarm," "Hebe," "Onyx," "Renard," "Skipjack," "Spanker," and "Speedwell," gunboats, 700 to 800 tons, and 15 to 20 knots speed; and the "Landrail," gunboat, 950 tons, 11½ knots speed. There are also seven steam and thirteen sailing coast guard cruisers.

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† See page 470.

Mr. CATHCART WASON: Is there then no truth in the rumour that the services of the "Jackal," have been dispensed with?

*Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER: I cannot say.

Supplementary Lieutenants.

*Sir JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he can state the number of supplementary lieutenants on the 1st October, 1899; how many of these took part in war operations, since that date, in South Africa, China, or West Africa; how many of those who took part in such operations have been promoted to the active list of commanders by the exercise of power reserved to the Admiralty by Order in Council of 29th June, 1895; and whether he can state the names of those officers so promoted.

*Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER: The number of supplementary lieutenants on the list on the 1st October, 1899, was 137. Seven of these officers have taken part in war operations since that date. Three have been promoted to the rank of commander on the active list, namely—Lieutenants the Hon. E. S. H. Boyle and G. P. E. Hunt for services in South Africa, and Lieutenant Gaunt for services in Samoa.

Boer Prisoners in Ceylon.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, in view of the fact that a number of Boer prisoners including an Irishman named A. O'Brien, are still confined in Ceylon with black criminals there, he will state on what grounds these men are still imprisoned; and will they be released immediately, in view of the general amnesty in South Africa.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. J. Chamberlain, Birmingham, W.): Nineteen of the irreconcilable prisoners of war in Ceylon having been guilty of insubordination have been lodged, for safe custody, in the military prison at Colombo where they are not in contact with black prisoners. I have been in communication with the Governor as to allowing these men to proceed to Java and have reason to believe that this will shortly be arranged.

South African Tariffs.

Mr. LAMBERT (Devonshire, South Molton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can give any information as to the preferential tariff proposed by the Bloemfontein Conference to be given to British goods imported into South Africa.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I am not in a position to say more at present than that the draft Convention for a South African Customs Union embodies a tariff giving preferential rates to the Mother Country.

Cotton Cultivation in the West Indies.

Mr. RUNCIMAN (Dewsbury): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, in view of the fact that the publication of the Imperial Department of Agriculture for the West Indies called "Information relating to Cotton Cultivation in the West Indies, 1903," is not to be obtained in London, and no copies can arrive in England for some time, he can state how many estates in the West Indies which were previously devoted to the cultivation of sugar are now being devoted to the cultivation of cotton.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: A copy of the publication in question has been sent to the hon. Member, and two copies have been placed in the Library of the House. I am informed that more copies can be obtained from the West India Committee, Billiter Square Buildings, E.C., and that the London publishers, Messrs. Dulan and Company, will shortly have a fresh supply.

Transvaal and Orange River Finances.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will lay upon the Table the Estimates of revenue and expenditure for the current year for the administration of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colonies, and also for Rhodesia.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The Summary Estimates of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony will be included in the Papers which will shortly be laid before Parliament. The Rhodesia Estimates will also be laid in due course.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: Will they be laid separately or only as part of the Blue-book?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I have already promised to lay some Papers before Parliament, and the Summary Estimates will be included in the first batch. Rhodesia will come later.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.): Shall we get them before the Budget is introduced?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I cannot say.

High Treason Trials in South Africa.

MR. McGOVERN (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, in view of the number of Englishmen and other British subjects, including natives of Cape Colony, who fought on the side of the Boers during the late war in South Africa, and were captured or surrendered at its close, he will state how many of these men have been tried for high treason.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I am unable to give the exact figures, but I believe that there were over 10,000 in Cape Colony alone, and a large number in Natal. Of the 10,000 something over 8,000 men were convicted or pleaded guilty. The remainder were acquitted.

Austrian Sugar Industry.

MR. LOUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Austrian Government has approved a system of restricting the output of sugar similar to that prevailing in Russia, so as to increase the advantage it can derive from the clause setting up a surtax in the Brussels Convention; whether Germany has declined to adopt this system, and is of opinion that it creates a bounty and exposes Austrian sugar to retaliatory duties; and whether any correspondence has taken place with the Austrian Government on the matter.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord CRANBORNE, Rochester): A law has been passed in Austria for the regulation of the amount of sugar allowed to be produced for the home market. Baron Thielmann, the German Secretary of the Treasury, is reported to have stated that the Federated Governments did not as yet see any reason to propose for Germany any such measure, which would mean the establishment of a monopoly for existing factories, and to have added that the decision of the question whether or not this law creates a bounty would rest with the Permanent Commission at Brussels. No correspondence has taken place on the subject with the Austrian Government.

MR. LOUGH: Have the Government expressed any opinion on it.

LORD CRANBORNE: We are not called upon to express any opinion. That is a matter for the Permanent Commission.

Imported Foreign Flour.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether any drawback is given on imported foreign flour when re-exported in the same condition as it is imported; what drawback is given if the flour is landed and re-bagged; what is the approximate cost of landing and re-bagging as compared with the drawback; and whether there has been any decline in the transhipment trade in flour at ports of the United Kingdom since the imposition of the corn tax.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): The answer to the first part of the Question is in the negative; as to the second part, drawback of 5d. per cwt. is given. The Board of Customs have no information as to the cost of landing and re-bagging; the cost, however, probably varies at different places according to local circumstances. There are no records of the quantities of foreign and colonial flour transhipped at ports in the United Kingdom before the imposition of the corn duties, and I am consequently unable to state whether there has since been any decline in the transhipment trade in that article. During the period from 14th April, 1902, till the 31st March the transhipments of flour under bond amounted to 112,571 cwts.

School Board Accounts.

MR. LUKE WHITE (Yorkshire, E.R., Buckrose): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether on counties the liabilities of School Boards up to the appointed day under the Education Act will be apportioned and charged on each School Board district; and whether the proportion of grant up to such appointed day, together with any credit balance, will be allocated to the credit of each such district.

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. GRANT LAWSON, Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk): I am consulting the Law Officers of the Crown on certain financial questions arising on the Act, and I must ask leave to defer a reply to the hon. Member until their opinion has been received.

Regulation Acts—Great Southern and Western Railway Company and its Employees

MR. BELL (Derby): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the fact that the Great Southern and Western Railway Company have issued forms to their employees for their signatures, which pledge them to secrecy; and whether he can take any steps to prevent the men being debarred from making complaints under the Railway Servants (Hours) Act, 1893, and the Railways (Prevention of Accidents) Act, 1900.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): My attention was directed to a newspaper statement on the subject, and I communicated with the railway company. In reply, I am informed that there was no intention whatever to debar workmen from exercising their legal rights under Acts of Parliament. The Company's workmen are, in fact, not asked to sign the circular, which was simply intended to prevent the clerical staff from communicating the company's confidential business to persons outside the office.

Sub Post-Offices on Licensed Premises.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he can state the number of sub post-offices there are on licensed premises in the United Kingdom.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, Worcestershire, E.): No, Sir; I can add nothing to the reply I gave the hon. Member on this subject on the 19th March.†

London Postal Telephone Service.

SIR THOMAS DEWAR (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he will state how much of the money voted by Parliament for the establishment of a Post Office telephone service in London has been extended, the number of subscribers in London who now use the Post-Office system, and the number who have agreed to subscribe but who are not yet provided with the service; and whether, seeing that persons in the South Western District who contracted to subscribe some months ago have not yet been afforded telephone facilities, he can state when the telephone service for London is likely to be complete.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The expenditure on the London telephone service to the 28th February amounted to £1,067,000. A considerable part of this amount is for plant and stores which have not yet been brought into use, but have been provided to meet the future requirements of the system. Seven exchanges have been opened since the 1st March, 1901, and 8,749 telephones are now in use in connection with these exchanges. About 2,000 agreements for other lines are on hand, and from 150 to 200 new lines are being brought into use every week. Probably the cases of delay which the hon. Member has in view have arisen from the difficulty of obtaining wayleaves from the local authorities; but if he will furnish me with particulars I shall be glad to have special inquiry made on the subject. Four other important exchanges will be opened in the course of this year, and arrangements are in progress for the establishment of several others. In view of the increasing demand for new exchanges, and of the rapid development of the existing exchanges, it is not possible to name any date for the final completion of the Post Office system in London.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxix. 1230.

Hampton Court Road Footways.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the hon. Member for North Huntingdonshire whether His Majesty's Office of Works will take steps to require the London United Tramways Company to make footpaths on either side of Hampton Court Road, east of Garrick's Villa, for the safety of foot passengers before that company is allowed to open its tramway system along that road for traffic.

MR. AILWYN FELLOWES (Huntingdonshire, Ramsey): The scheme for the widening of the Hampton Court Road was approved by the Office of Works at the special request of the Hampton District Council. Suitable footpaths are included in the scheme; the footpath on the park side, however, cannot be fully completed until the proposed new iron railing which is now being made is put up. The Office of Works have received no representations that any danger will attend the use of the tramway meanwhile.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: But will the tramway be opened before the footways are properly completed?

MR. AILWYN FELLOWES: That is a question for the local authorities rather than for the Office of Works.

Pacific Cable.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what is the estimated loss on the working of the Pacific Cable for the coming financial year; what portion of the loss will fall on the taxpayers of the United Kingdom; whether the Admiralty is responsible for the decision to take the cable *viâ* Fanning Island; what is the increased cost of construction by this route as compared with the alternative route *viâ* Honolulu; and what is the amount of local business obtained at Fanning Island.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HAYES FISHER, Fulham): The loss on the working of the Pacific Cable for the coming financial year is estimated, on the basis of the present receipts, and after allowing for interest and sinking fund and depreciation, at about £95,000. Five-eighteenths of the actual loss will fall on the taxpayers of the United Kingdom. The route *viâ* Fanning Island which the cable follows was adopted on the recommendation of the Pacific Cable Committee, over which Lord Selborne presided; and was selected in order that the cable might touch on no territory which was not British. It is estimated that if the cable had been taken *viâ* Honolulu the cost of its construction would have been about the same as that which has been incurred; the only local business at Fanning Island is practically that arising from passing vessels, Lloyds having established a signal station on the island.

Coleraine Labourers' Cottage Scheme.

MR. HUNTER CRAIG (Lanarkshire, Govan): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if the attention of the Irish Local Government Board has been called to the recent proceedings before the Coleraine Rural District Council in the Coleraine district, where an occupant of a labourer's cottage was charged before the Council with permitting his daughters to take in sewing, and was induced, under threat of eviction, to promise that this should be discontinued, and that his daughters should work in the fields; and that the Council have adopted a form of agreement for the letting of labourers' cottages, binding the family of the labourer to work at agricultural work when required; and will he say if the Local Government Board has sanctioned the form of such agreements; and, if not, will he take steps to prevent such conditions being introduced in the future.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): My hon. friend has been misinformed in respect to the facts. A man named Leighton applied to the Council for a cottage. One or two councillors observed that he was not an agricultural labourer, and that his daughters were shirtmakers. He satisfied the Council that he and his family had always worked for farmers, and was accepted as a tenant of a cottage. He has not been threatened with eviction. The form of agreement made with tenants of cottages does not bind the family in the manner suggested.

Irish Townpark Tenants.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will consider the advisability of including in the new Land Bill a clause forbidding the imposition of large percentages of increase upon the improvements made by tenants of townparks in Ireland.

MR. WYNDHAM: If a townpark is let and used as an agricultural or pastoral holding, or as partly agricultural and partly pastoral, a rent can be fixed under the same conditions as in the case of an ordinary farm. If, on the contrary, a townpark is not so let, it is in the same position as other holdings which are excluded from the Land Law Acts. No alteration of the existing law is therefore called for.

Irish Assistant Teachers.

MR. SLOAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that assistant teachers of over fifteen years' service appointed to principalships since 1st April, 1900, and whose schools maintain an average of over thirty pupils, who were included in the first class of national teachers, are graded under the new rules as third grade teachers, their pay being less than the maximum salary attached to that grade; and whether he will take steps to include these teachers in the first grade.

MR. WYNDHAM: I am informed that the cases of assistants highly classed under the rules hitherto in force, but not receiving full class salary, may be specially considered on their promotion to principalships. It does not follow that such teachers will be placed in the grades corresponding to their classes, nor could any such rule as the hon. Member suggests be made. The grade of teachers depends on training, ability, and general attainments, good service, seniority, and the average attendance at the school in which the teacher is serving, and all these matters must be considered when determining the grade of an assistant on promotion to a principalship.

Irish Local Government Auditors—Major Eccles.

MR. O'MARA (Kilkenny, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the date of appointment as an auditor of the Local Government Board for Ireland of Major Eccles; what qualifications this gentleman possessed, and on whose recommendation was he appointed; and, seeing that this auditor for two years failed to discover the irregularities of the Mullingar Asylum funds, will he say why it is proposed to retain his services.

MR. WYNDHAM: Major Eccles was appointed auditor in June, 1900. He had previously acted, temporarily, in the same capacity, and satisfied the Civil Service Commissioners as to his qualifications. The suggestion that there was remissness on his part in tracing these irregularities has no foundation in fact. I would refer the hon. Member to my reply to a similar Question put to me on the 17th December last.†

Sneem Evictions.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state under what circumstances Mrs. Ellen Mahony, a widow, whose holding was at Dreenaveerig, near Sneem, was evicted on 26th March.

MR. WYNDHAM: She refused to pay any rent since the death of her husband some years ago. She was not a tenant, and the ejectment was on title.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxvi. 1511.

MR. BOLAND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that on 26th March, Cornelius Moriarty was evicted from his house in the village of Sneem although he was willing to pay rent for the house, his tender being refused; and whether he can state how many families have been evicted from the thatched houses in Sneem during the last six years.

MR. WYNDHAM: In this case also the eviction was on title. Moriarty never paid rent, and, I am informed, made no offer to pay any. The reply to the concluding inquiry is, three.

Warden Estate, Sneem.

MR. BOLAND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, at an inquiry held in Kenmare in March, 1902, the erection of a cottage on a portion of the Warden Estate at Sneem was opposed by the landlords, although the bailiff admitted at the inquiry that a threat had been made to evict John O'Neill if he gave shelter to his brother, Patrick O'Neill, who had been previously evicted; and whether, seeing that Robert O'Sullivan, of Sneem, was evicted for having given shelter to Patrick O'Neill, who was willing to pay rent for a house in the village, and Patrick O'Neill was evicted on 26th March, and in view of the proposals in the Irish Land Bill, he can take steps to secure the reinstatement of this man.

MR. WYNDHAM: The bailiff did not, I am informed, make the admission mentioned in the Question. The proposals dealing with the reinstatement of evicted tenants are contained in Section 2 (*d*) of the Bill.

Brown Hall Estate, County Mayo.

MR. JOHN O'DONNELL (Mayo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Irish Land Commission or the Congested Districts Board will take steps to take over the grazing lands on the Brown Hall estate, near Balla, County Mayo, now about being disposed of by the Court of Chancery, which have been in the hands of a large grazier since 1900, for the purpose of enlarging the holdings of the agricultural tenants on the estate who are now about purchasing their holdings.

I beg also to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether his attention has been directed to the efforts made by the tenants on the Brown Hall estate, near Balla, County Mayo, to obtain turbary on several neighbouring estates; and to the fact that there are on that estate, and on a grazing tract held for the past two years by a resident in the town of Balla, about fifteen acres of excellent turbary; and whether, seeing that the remainder of this estate is about being sold to the tenants by the Court of Chancery, and that the tenants are prepared to give the same amount of purchase money for the turbary and grazing lands as they are giving for their holdings, he can take steps to have these fifteen acres divided among them.

MR. WYNDHAM: This estate is administered in the Court of the Land Judge. The proceedings for the sale to the tenants of their holdings will, it is expected, be shortly completed. I am informed that there is no grazing or bog land available for apportionment amongst the tenants on the estate. The land to which reference is made is let to one of the tenants as an ordinary tenant. The turbary in question is nearly all, so I understand, cut away.

Irish Land Bill—Future Tenants and Caretakers.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Land Bill contains any provisions to enable future tenants and caretakers to purchase their holdings.

MR. WYNDHAM: Future tenants are tenants whose tenancies were created since the passing of the Act of 1881. If they are tenants of holdings to which the Land Law Acts apply—that is to say, broadly, agricultural, or pastoral holdings—they will be entitled to purchase under Clause 1 (1) (*a*), or, by agreement and sanction, under 1 (1) (*b*). The words in the Bill "to which the Land Law Acts apply" must not be interpreted as meaning "to which the fair rent provisions of the Land Law Acts apply." Many of the provisions of the Land Law Acts apply to future tenants. Caretakers have no tenure or rights as such. If, however, they happen to have been evicted from holdings to which the Land Law Acts apply within twenty-five years before the passing of the Act they will be entitled under Clause 2 (1) (*d*) to advances for the purchase of parcels of land up to £500, or in special cases £1,000. It is probable that a large number of caretakers come within this class.

Imprisonment for Contempt of Court.

Mr. M'GOVERN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that John M'Elligott, who has been confined in Dundalk Gaol since June, 1901, for contempt of court, has no means to employ counsel to make an application for his release; and whether, in view of this man's state of health and of the nature of his contempt, will he take steps to secure his release.

Mr. WYNDHAM: M'Elligott was committed for contempt on a writ of attachment issued by the Master of the Rolls in July, 1901. The nature of the contempt consisted in his having retaken forcible possession of a farm from which he had been evicted. The Government has no power to act in the manner suggested in the Question. The prisoner's health is good, and I am informed that his wife, who is still in possession of the holding, has ample means to enable her to employ a counsel to make application for his release.

Mr. M'GOVERN: Is it a fact that this man offered to pay the rent of the farm from which he was evicted?

Mr. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): Two years in gaol for contempt of court!

Glengarriff Burial Ground.

Mr. GILHOOLY (Cork Co., W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether in view of the fact that there is a main road between the new Roman Catholic Church at Glengarriff and the burial ground, he will consider the advisability of vesting the burial ground in the Bantry Rural District Council under the provisions of the Irish Church Act of 1869.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The Question does not contain sufficient information to enable the burial ground in question to be identified. If the burial ground attached to the Church described as "Holy Trinity, Glengarriff," is referred to, its transfer to the District Council could only be made by the Representative Church Body.

White Estate near Bantry

Mr. GILHOOLY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can now state approximately when the sale of the White Estate (near Bantry) will take place.

Mr. WYNDHAM: The Land Judge has interrogated the solicitor having carriage of the sale of this estate and is satisfied that he is in no way to blame for any delay that may have taken place in the proceedings. A large amount of work yet remains to be done and it cannot be stated, even approximately, when the sale will take place.

The Penrhyn Quarry Dispute.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister a question of which I have given him private notice—namely, what steps the Government propose to take in view of the failure of the recent negotiations for the settlement of the Penrhyn quarry dispute?

The PRIME MINISTER and FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): In answer to the right hon. Gentleman I have to say that this matter has been most carefully watched by His Majesty's Government; and my right hon. friend the President of the Board of Trade will, as he has more than once stated, intervene in the direction of conciliation if he sees there is the smallest prospect of such intervention leading to good results. Intervention where there is no such prospect would do more harm than good.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Will the right hon. Gentleman give a day so as to enable the House to express its opinion on the subject?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not imagine there is a single topic such as this, which is chiefly of local interest, which has been discussed so often in this House. I do not think it would be possible to assign a day for the third or fourth discussion.

INCEST BILL.

Reported, with Amendments, from the Standing Committee on Law, etc.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 104.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 104.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee) to be taken into consideration upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 134.]

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Mr. HALSEY reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged the following members from the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures; Mr. Solicitor-General and Mr. Boland, and had appointed in substitution Mr. Attorney-General and Mr. O'Mara.

Mr. HALSEY further reported from the Committee: That they had added to the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures, the following fifteen members in respect of the Sale of Adulterated Butter Bill: Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas, Major Bagot, Mr. Bond, Earl of Dalkeith, Mr. Dalziel, Sir Joseph Dimsdale, Sir Walter Foster, Mr. Flynn, Mr. Gilhooly, Mr. Hanbury, Mr. Henry Hobhouse, Mr. Joyce, Mr. Kearley, Mr. O'Neill, and Mr. O'Shaughnessy.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILLS.

BURGH POLICE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"To amend the law relating to the administration of Burghs in Scotland," presented by Mr. Asher; supported by Mr. John Morley, Sir Robert Reid, Mr. Parker Smith, Mr. Robert Wallace, and Colonel Denny; to be read a second time upon Friday, 1st May, and to be printed. [Bill 135.]

POST OFFICE SITES BILL.

"To enable His Majesty's Postmaster-General to acquire lands in London and Bristol for the public service, and for other purposes," presented by Mr. Austen Chamberlain; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 136.]

HALL-MARKING OF FOREIGN PLATE (No. 2) BILL.

"To amend the law relating to the Hall-marking of Foreign Plate," presented by Mr. Samuel Roberts; supported by Mr. Stuart-Wortley, Sir Benjamin Stone, Sir Joseph Dimsdale, and Mr. Remnant; to be read a second time to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 132.]

HIGHWAYS BILL.

"To amend the Law for the administration of Highways," presented by Mr. Henry Hobhouse; supported by Sir John Dorington, Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice, Mr. Bill, Mr. Heywood Johnstone, and Mr. Herbert Lewis; to be read a second time upon Friday, 24th April, and to be printed. [Bill 137.]

SUPPLY (CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES).

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

THE HOUSING PROBLEM.

*MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said that, in moving the Resolution which stood in his name on the Paper, he wished at once to state that he did so in no spirit of personal hostility to the Minister charged with the administration of the Housing Acts; on the contrary what he proposed to endeavour to show was that the Acts, as far as they had been administered, had not worked unsuccessfully, and he desired to urge upon Parliament the importance of carrying them out more effectively. The question was one of national importance, because the character of the new century would be largely decided by the kind of houses out of which the children came. Housing was no longer a mere question of clearing slums. It was not a matter of the dwellings of the working classes alone; it threatened to be a question of the housing of the people generally. Legislation became a farce if its express injunctions were not enforced by those entrusted with the administration. The obvious intention of the Acts was that when a dwelling-house became unfit for human habitation there should be no delay in obtaining a closing order. Since 1885, from the Central Government downwards, the authorities had had all the powers they needed for this purpose; but that the state of things in town and country was grave they had a reminder in the fact that the Alien Commission had unintentionally largely resolved itself into a housing inquiry. How came it, then, that the Housing Acts had to a large extent remained a dead letter, and that the very effective powers given to the authorities for the abatement of nuisances had failed? The fact remained that large numbers of the working classes had been driven from houses declared by the local authorities to be insanitary to overcrowd other houses hitherto sanitary. In both town and country cases had occurred in which families had not merely been driven into the street, but had had to go into the workhouse for shelter, because they could not get a house to live in. That was not all, for there was an acute housing problem in all the large villa districts near London, as well as in the most fashionable watering places. He could not help thinking that the reason for this state of affairs might well be explained by the old proverb that what was everybody's business was nobody's business.

Practical men, who had to deal with housing were met with an obstacle on the threshold, viz., the absence of any single central housing authority. It was true that both the Local Government Board and the Home Office had some part in the administration of these Acts. But the Local Government Board, which was the Department that had most to do with housing, had not a single officer whose sole duty it was to look after the administration of the Housing Acts. There was no person or department in existence, in connection with either the Local Government Board or the Home Office, which studied the housing question as a whole, which looked after the housing needs of the country, which inquired into the deficiency of house room, which investigated the extent of overcrowding, or which sought to put an end to the evils of insanitation. Had any effort been made to carry out the obvious intention of the Housing Acts that when a dwelling house was unfit for human habitation there should be no delay in closing it, whether in connection with a housing scheme or not? The fact was, neither the Local Government Board nor the Home Office had a Housing Intelligence Department, and had such a department existed the census definitions as to a house would not have been so misleading, for the department would not have allowed returns to be made which represented a single house as several houses, according to the number of people living in it. Even with this imperfect method of computation, the census of 1901 showed that the general conclusions drawn from the census of 1891, as to overcrowding, had not been upset, and that the improvement in this matter in ten years had been hopelessly inadequate. The figures of the 1901 census were not all available, so I must use the figures of the census of 1891. Taking England and Wales as a whole, the census of 1891 showed that there were 3,250,000 people living in overcrowded dwellings. The census of 1891 showed only 3,000,000 rooms for 969,318 families, including all classes. In Glasgow not less than one-fifth of the people live in one-roomed dwellings, and over half had houses with not more than two rooms. In Edinburgh more than half the homes consisted of one and two rooms, and in Hull, during two years, the population had increased by 9,000 but there were only 1,200 more dwellings, thus showing a deficiency of 4,000 buildings. An official report on Dublin in 1900 showed 10,000 persons in want of accommodation and 6,000 families improperly housed. In Birmingham during the last ten years the number of dwellings rented at 5s. per week had been reduced from 57,000 to 54,000 including the worst slums. In the counties of Northumberland and Durham one-third of the total population, urban and rural, lived in overcrowded houses. Surely these figures justified him in demanding that there should be a highly organised Government Department to deal with this subject. No fresh legislation was required, because Section 29, Sub-section 3 of the Public Health Act, 1890, empowered the Local Government Board

> "To make such inquiries as it might see fit in relation to any matter concerning the Public Health in any place."

Under Sub-section 2 of Section 31 of the Housing Act, 1890, the Board had power to take steps to put the Act in force if the local authority neglected to do so. What he complained of was that the administration of the Acts by the Central Government had neither aided active local authorities nor had it stimulated inactive ones. He admitted, however, that when a scheme had been brought before either the Local Government Board or the Home Office, both the Ministers responsible and the permanent officials had given it sympathetic consideration and had facilitated its progress through the Department.

He wished particularly to press upon the House the fact that the question of overcrowding was an administrative one. The evils of over-crowding might thus be described. First it enabled high rents to be obtained, secondly it rendered insanitary houses which were sanitary when not overcrowded, thirdly it created new slums faster than old ones could be removed, and, fourthly, it established among young people a low standard of home life and sanitation. One result of that was that 8,000 men from Manchester were rejected out of 11,000 intending recruits for the Army, on the ground of physical unfitness. Durham, the most overcrowded county in England, was at the head of the list for drunkenness. The death rate in Sheffield from zymotic diseases doubled the average for the whole country. Pauper lunatics were the most numerous where the houses were most overcrowded. The local authorities were busy building isolation hospitals and asylums instead of decent homes for the people, and it was an interesting fact that, while appeals were being made right and left for funds for our hospitals the local authorities never seemed to be aware that such appeals were rendered necessary by the low standard of health which resulted from ill housing. The best way to reduce the cost of the hospitals was to take away the insanitary conditions which so greatly increased the number of preventable cases of sickness. There was another result of overcrowding which very closely concerned the administration of the Local Government Board. It was referred to even fifty years ago by Lord Shaftesbury, when he estimated that, owing to being cooped up in hovels unfit for human habitation, the labouring man was incapacitated by sheer exhaustion during thirty days of the year, and this, at 1s. 6d. per day, represented an annual loss of £2. 5s. It had been noticed that the vitality of men at fifty-seven in Manchester was not equal to that of men at sixty-five in England generally, and that striking fact had been brought out by Dr. Tatham, who pointed out that over-crowding had shortened their lives by eight years. The Royal Commission reported, in 1885, that the general tone of the health of the people was a worse feature of over-crowding than was the encouragement by it of infectious diseases. Those who took an interest in this subject had never yet been able to ascertain the ground upon which the administration of these Acts had been partially entrusted to the Home Office, and partially to the Local Government Board. Surely it would be in the interests of the country as a whole that there should be some guide given by a central Department to the local authorities in the performance of their duties under the Act. Hitherto, unfortunately, there had not been any such arrangement, and, as a consequence, they had but very imperfectly coped with the evils of overcrowding.

He had quoted statistics in regard to overcrowding in towns, but the mischief was not confined to large centres of population. It was quite as bad in rural districts, and it was remarkable that where in a rural district the population had been stationary or diminishing, the supply of houses had been unequal to the demand. Fresh law was not so much required as the enforcement of the existing law. It was strange that in the rural districts, where the capacity for rent paying was lowest, the obstacles in the way of cheap municipal dwellings were greatest. The rate of interest on loans was higher, and the Local Government Board regulations were unsuitable and unnecessarily restrictive. Only two District Councils had actually built cottages, namely, Ixworth and Penshurst. Ireland was ahead of England in rural housing. In that country something like 15,000 municipal cottages had been erected for labourers. These houses were generally built by skilled workmen whose wages ran from 30s. to 33s. per week. The cost of erection was £150 per cottage, and the rents varied from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 6d. per cottage per week.

He might be allowed to show by way of illustration the way in which red tape and apathy prevented the Housing Acts from being carried out. He ventured to think that the Local Government Board could have done a great deal to remove that apathy if they had shown more activity in the administration of the statutes. In November 1895, a motion was made at the Parish Council of Penshurst in favour of building cottages. The motion was rejected; in April 1896, a parish committee was appointed to consider the subject; in July 1896, the Committee reported that twenty cottages were needed for workpeople working within a mile of the village; in October 1896, the Parish Council called upon the District Council to put Part III. of the Housing Acts into force; in March 1897, the District Council held an inquiry; in July 1897 the County Council held a public inquiry, granted the necessary certificate to put Housing Acts in force, and declared urgency; in December 1897 a Parish Council and District Council Joint Committee was formed; in November 1898, builders' tenders were accepted by the District Council; in December 1898 plans were sent to the Local Government Board; in March 1899 the Local Government Board held an inquiry—the third public inquiry; and in September 1899 the Local Government Board sanctioned a scheme and a loan. These facts proved that it took five years to build twenty cottages under the Housing of the Working Classes Act. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board would say that he had no power to prevent that. He himself felt, and a great many outside of the House felt, that "where there's a will there's a way," and that if the Local Government Board had had even one mind devoted entirely to the study of the Housing Question throughout the country they would have been able, under the law as it now stood, to create a businesslike system which would not have allowed the ridiculous string of dates which he had unfortunately had to allude to, and which illustrated the difficulties which surrounded the best will of the local authorities to carry out the law and to deal with the evil which lay at the root of the whole social system. His case did not finish with the illustration he had given from Penshurst. The Local Government Board issued model bye-laws with regard to buildings, and these were of a very cast-iron character. His right hon. friend had in the last year or two appointed a committee which had done something to mitigate the severity of these regulations. He might be allowed to instance some of the regulations. Adding an attic bedroom to a workman's cottage involved, according to the Local Government Board regulations, an increase of 50 per cent. in the thickness of the walls up to the first floor. This meant an uncalled for extra outlay of £20 per house. Another irksome Local Government Board restriction required party-walls of cottages to be carried through the roofs. These regulations were not enforced at Manchester or Richmond, but they were enforced at Hornsey with the result that they ininvolved a cost of nearly £10 more per house. Surely what was good enough for Manchester, which was a town where special precaution must be taken in these matters owing to fire risk in a big city, was also good enough for Hornsey. The observation he would venture to make on these regulations was that there was general lack of uniformity, and at the same time lack of elasticity.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. WALTER LONG, Bristol, S.): I am quite unable to follow my hon. friend. If he refers to Local Government Board regulations I don't know what he means. If he is referring to by-laws, I would say that they are issued as a model form to local authorities. If he is referring to Local Government Board regulations with regard to loans, that is another matter.

* **MR. CLAUDE HAY** said the model by-laws were the basis of the regulations adopted by the local authorities. His contention was that if there had been, as there should be, a governing principle in the action of the Board to produce uniformity they would not have the condition of things which made a cottage at Hornsey cost more than one at Manchester. He would emphasise his point by reminding the right hon. Gentlemen that the bye-laws issued by the Local Government Board prevented the use of many commodities or materials in the erection of these cottages. No doubt a great advance had been made by two things—firstly, by the Local Government Board having comparatively recently allowed buildings to be erected in agricultural districts, and secondly by allowing in the case of Richmond the application of sinking fund moneys for new borrowings, thus enabling Richmond to convert its workmen's dwelling loans from 3¼ per cents. and 3½ per cent. temporary loans into 3 per cent. permanent loans. This made a very considerable difference in the finance of these buildings. This was a great public and national question, and yet it was a question which involved nothing but bricks and mortar and money. He would earnestly appeal to the House to apply itself to the removal of what was a very grave reproach upon the country as a whole. The question of housing was not like temperance, or habitual criminality, or religious education, inextricably mixed up with unfathomable secrets of human nature which rendered it absolutely impossible to know whether the best intentioned legislation must not hinder rather than promote its object. It was a mechanical question and it did not involve the difficulty of trying to make a man temperate by Act of Parliament, which was ten thousand times as difficult as to make twenty people live in two houses instead of one. While intemperance and other evils had been distinctly decreasing, overcrowding had been distinctly increasing. One of the first ways of removing the evils was not to demand fresh legislation, but to enforce the existing law. In order to enforce the existing law they should study the condition of things throughout the whole country through the central Government, and having done that, the public and the legislature would know the true dimensions of the subject, and they would be able to remove what was not only a slur upon this House but what was in his humble judgment a mortal injury to the whole nation. He moved: "That, in the opinion of the House, the administration of the Housing Acts by the Departments concerned is unsatisfactory and defective."

Amendment proposed.

"To leave out from the word 'That' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'in the opinion of this House, the administration of the Housing Acts by the departments concerned is unsatisfactory and defective,'—instead thereof."—(*Mr. Claude Hay.*)

Question proposed.

"That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

DR. MACNAMARA (Camberwell, N.) said the House was under an obligation to the hon. Member for Hoxton for having brought this matter of housing accommodation before them. There was no need for him to rehearse the figures the hon. Member gave as to the gravity of the problem. They were all agreed as to the evil, and they were all anxious to remove it if possible. He need not go into the misery, destitution, immorality, and drunkenness which followed in its train, but he disagreed so far with his hon. friend, if he suggested that they could remedy this without any great difficulty by improving administration. They could peddle with the question, but the rules of the House would not enable them to do anything more. They must all agree that legislation of a sweeping character was necessary before they could deal adequately with this problem. He must confine himself absolutely to questions of administration at present, but he might be permitted to say he was grateful to the President of the Local Government Board for having promised to deal this session with one or two matters recommended by the two Select Committees which reported last year.

His hon. friend referred in the first place to what was a very real and great inconvenience, and that was the fact that in respect to the country the Local Government Board dealt with all questions o housing administration, and that in respect to London the Home Office was the authority which administered the law. As a member of one of the two Committees last year it was pretty closely brought home to him that there was a conflict of view, a differentiation of interpretation, and different rates of expedition in respect of administration resulting from the system of dual authority. He could quote from the Report of the Joint Committee a great many instances of what he had said, but it would suffice if he gave one. In passing, he would say that he was profoundly impressed with the enthusiasm, the spirit of devotion, and the ready knowledge shown by the officials of the Home Office and the Local Government Department who were called before the Committee. They seemed to him to be inspired by a desire to do their best with the work they had in hand. The Committee called before them Mr. Byrne, the principal Clerk of the Home Office, to give evidence in respect of that duty of rehousing the population cast upon railway and other public companies which demolished dwelling-houses in the course of their operations; and he told the Committee that it was the invariable practice of the Home Office, in respect to the new houses, that they should have a veto on the rental which should be paid for each tenement. Indeed, when the hon. Member for Hoxton asked: "In effect, the Home Office claims to be in practice a 'fair rent' court?" And the answer was: "Yes, with regard to this extremely limited class of dwellings." On the other hand, the Committee had before them Mr. Kershaw, an equally assiduous and clever officer, and assistant secretary to the Local Government Board. He referred Mr. Kershaw to what Mr. Bryne had said as to the practice of the Home Office insisting on a right of veto on the rent, and asked him: "You observe that the Secretary of State considers it essential that he should have a veto over the rent?" And his answer was: "Yes, in London." "Quite so; and that if it should ever be held that the provisions of the Model Clause do not enable him to exercise that power, he would strongly recommend to Parliament that the Act should be strengthened so as to provide for it?" "Yes." "That is not the view of the Local Government Board?" "No, because we are not dealing with London, and Mr. Bryne restricted his answer to London." That was scarcely a relevant discrimination, and he only gave it as an illustration of the conflict of authority. If the Home Office thought it desirable to have a veto on the rental of the new houses in London, why should not the Local Government Board have the same veto in the provinces? He should like to ask the right hon. Gentlemen opposite what they had to say to a couple of small—he would not say peddling—but practical recommendations which the Committee on the Housing of the Working Classes made—

> "We recommend that the new houses to be provided be suitable for persons of the labouring class and not too ambitious in character and design; we attach much importance to these conditions."

Perhaps the President of the Local Government Board would tell the House what he proposed to do in respect of that recommendation. It was not a matter of legislation here, for the Local Government Board had general powers under the Housing of the Working Classes Act of 1890. The President of the Local Government Board stated that all the Local Government Board did was to issue model by-laws. That was so. But supposing the local authority in its discretion did not think it was necessary to live up to these model by-laws and proposed a scheme to provide housing on a little less ambitious scale, what was the position of the Local Government Board then? Would the Board reject that scheme or sanction it? Was it true that the Local Government Board would not permit any material deviation from their model by-laws?

MR. WALTER LONG: Not in the manner described by the hon. Gentleman. The regulations to which he refers deal entirely either with matters of sanitation or what may be called the social comforts of the people occupying the houses, such as the requirements of space for each inhabitant, the proper provision of sanitary arrangements, and such things as had been referred to by His Majesty the King the other day—the provision of cupboards in the rooms and lockers for keeping food. These regulations are all to be enforced; but when it comes to buildings of a more ambitious character and design we would not withhold our sanction from any scheme, provided there were proper sanitary arrangements.

DR. MACNAMARA: Then all I can say is that many local authorities are under a serious misapprehension in regard to that matter.

MR. WALTER LONG: This is very important. Statements like that made by the hon. Gentleman have been repeated often and often in this House, and I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for having mentioned the matter, so that I can answer them. I have asked repeatedly in this House and in communications to local authorities for them, but no specific instances have been given to me in which my Department has interfered in order to enforce a more ambitious or a more extravagant class of buildings. The only cases that have ever been brought before me are those to which I have referred, or the case of which the hon. Member for Hoxton spoke, where it is obvious to anyone that the walls which would bear a cottage of one floor would not usually be strong enough to bear a second storey. All the other cases of interference of my Department have been concerned solely with the requirements of public health, or what may be called public safety.

DR. MACNAMARA said that that was a very proper interference. But he believed it was a fact that in the case of Darwen the local authority, under their own by-laws respecting sanitation, could have provided houses to be let at about 5s. per week; but in order to comply with the Local Government Board's regulations they could not erect the houses on a business basis at a less rent charge than 6s. or 7s. a week. And his hon. friend gave another case where the carrying out of the Local Government Board's regulations ran up the rent more than a shilling a week. It was not desirable that the Local Government Board should insist in these matters in going beyond the question of general sanitation. He asked the right hon. Gentleman whether it was proposed to carry out the recommendation of the Committee he had read as to the necessity of the houses for the labouring class not being too ambitious in character and design. There was another matter which could be dealt with—the question of the area within which the rehousing must take place. The recommendation No. 6 of the Committee was:—

"It will be observed that the area within which the new houses may be provided under a scheme is left by us wholly to the dis retion of the central authority. It may be and we think will be found expedient in some cases to erect the new houses at some considerable distance from the houses demolished, and not necessarily within the jurisdiction of the same local authority."

That applied, in particular, to London, in consequence of the great movement of population from the City to the suburbs. He should be glad to have the views of the right hon. Gentleman in regard to the recommendation.

Then there was the recommendation of the other Select Committee which dealt with the question of the repayment of loans by the Local Authorities—not only housing loans but all loans. The period of the repayment of loans was fixed by a number of Statutes under which it might be from ten up to the maximum of sixty years—the latter period being fixed in 1875 with reference to housing and land. Now, the Select Committee made this statement—

"This being the general character of the public statutes dealing with the subject, it is obvious that the discretion left to the Government Departments which fix the actual period for the repayment of each loan, is a very wide one. Although some other Departments have duties in respect of certain loans, by far the greater part of the work of controlling the borrowings of local authorities falls, in England and Wales, upon the Local Government Board."

The Select Committee examined the practice, and they thought that the period in respect of the repayment of certain loans might be reduced: that the maximum period for the repayment of loans contracted for covering the expense of promoting Private Bills ought not to be more than five years; but when it came to the question raised by this Motion, the Committee having regard to the durability of the asset, had no doubt whatever that the period of repayment ought to be extended. It said that—

> "In regard to these loans, there is a widespread feeling amongst municipal authorities that the periods allowed for their repayment should be extended. The Committee recognise that there are certain considerations which differentiate the case of housing from that even of public water supply or sewage works, without which the population, even of towns, have contrived—and in some cases still contrive—to exist. If it is true that the supply of houses for the working classes by private enterprise has failed, generally or in certain places, or in regard to certain classes of workmen, to keep pace with the demand for such houses, caused either by increase of population or by demolition of dwellings, the matter appears to be one of exceptional gravity. . . . Therefore, the Committee feel that it is with regard to loans for rehousing purposes that the strongest claim for a revision of redemption periods can be established, and they proceed to examine what is the strength of that claim."

And finally it was said that there should be an extension to eighty years. The Committee pointed out that under the existing practice it was sixty years, but that the Local Government Board, in its discretion, did not allow in many cases provincial authorities to have that period, but that they could do that at once now. He asked the President of the Local Government Board to give his view of the desirability of extending the period for repayment up to sixty years, where the asset was durable. That would be a great consideration to many municipalities, and would enable them, with a modification of the by-laws in regard to dwelling houses, to reduce the rent of tenements by a few pence, which even would be a great boon. There was another recommendation by the Committee that some postponement of the repayment of the first instalment should be allowed in the case of certain works. These were small matters, and would not carry them very far. But he should be glad to have the views of the right hon. Gentleman upon them. He supported the Motion; but he dissociated himself entirely from the suggestion that the London County Council, particularly, had not done all it could under the present law. It had overcome a mountain of difficulties, having regard to the state of the law, and if the Government would assist in mitigating these difficulties by referring the small matters to which he referred to a select Committee, the debate would not have been raised in vain.

MR. MIDDLEMORE (Birmingham, N.) said he did not feel disposed to support this Motion, because it wa ssuch an insignificant way of peddling and tinkering with what seemed to be by far the greatest national question that they could deal with. As the hon. Member who proposed the Motion travelled rather widely over the question, perhaps he might be allowed in a very few words to state what he thought was the question. He had some right to make a statement, as some years of his life had been voluntarily spent in "Slum-land," and he thought he had a knowledge equal to that of the average Member on the question. This was not one question—it was a great congeries of questions; in fact, he might say that almost every social question was directly or indirectly associated with it. The housing question proper—if indeed there were such a question as the housing question proper—bore on such questions as the drink question, the land question, the education question, the general industrial system, and the aggregation of the population. It was almost like treating the matter with irony to propose such a resolution as that of his hon. friend. To illustrate what he meant he remarked that once he visited every house in "Slum-land" in one of our large towns and became acquainted with every house in it—so well acquainted that he could measure every room with his eye as well as his measure. One of the facts which struck him most—except perhaps, the fact that after every Christian holiday a great number of women had black eyes—was that in a very large number of houses where there were three bedrooms only one was occupied; the occupants were passing their lives in what was termed a "living-room." Of course the explanation was very simple—the drink bill, the sale for rent, and the pawnbrokers' shops. The economic pith of the question surely was that the population was increasing, and the rents of the houses were increasing quicker than the rate of wages of the people inhabiting them. There were only two ways of dealing with the question—one by decreasing the population, *i.e.*, by decreasing the birth-rate, and emigration.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! I am sorry to have to interrupt the hon.

Member, but he is now opening up the general question of the Housing of the Working Classes. That would not be admissible on the question that I now leave the Chair. The only subject that can be discussed is one arising on the Estimates. The hon. Gentleman is now discussing the general question, and he can only do so if he can connect it with some action on the part of a Government Department. That he does not appear to me to be attempting to do. It is important that the discussion should be confined to its proper limit.

MR. MIDDLEMORE said he had at the back of his mind that he was travelling beyond the limit, and he apologised. But his hon. friend made such wide expressions that he was hoping to follow in his footsteps. He should be very pleased to support a more drastic and effective measure than the present proposal, which was altogether too small and trifled with the question. He wanted some great measure to turn the people on the land and multiply the proposal of the hon. Member for the Hoxton Division 500 times.

*MR. AUSTIN TAYLOR (Liverpool, E. Toxteth) said be thought that on a question of this kind where the conditions were so complex, even merely as a matter of Government administration, it was quite natural that public attention should be directed to it; and his hon. friend the Member for Hoxton had taken the only course open to him to call attention to the matter, by framing his Motion in the form in which it was before the House. Of course the Motion might not be in the form which would be most acceptable to his hon. friend or to the Department on whose administration it appeared to reflect. There was always something exhilarating in attacking a Department, because of the animation which it produced. He should, however, like to say on behalf of the municipality which he represented that, as far as the actual administration of the Housing Acts was concerned, there were no complaints. He held in his hand one of the highest tributes to the Local Government Board which it had ever been his good fortune to come across. An official in a northern town connected with housing operations informed him that he had no difficulty at all with the Local Government Board and had always found the Board quite willing to be educated in the matter of housing. That was a unique tribute; and so far from a Department which was willing to be educated by the local authorities being the object of attack, it should be the object of praise, and should be held up as a pattern to other Departments. The administration of these Acts by the Local Government Board could not be complained of for the reason that, according to the Acts, the initiative should come from the local authority; and the Acts were so framed that the onus was thrown on the local authority. If the local authority did not move itself, or move its medical officer, power was given to two Justices of the Peace, or to any twelve ratepayers, to force the medical officer to make the necessary representations. Therefore, the initial responsibility for dealing with the matter rested not with the central authority but with the local authority, or failing them with the ratepayers who elected them to the position they occupied.

A certain series of questions were sent out by the Local Government Board to various provincial authorities in connection with this matter; and he would advocate that the policy which was indicated in that series of questions might be carried a little further, perhaps in the direction indicated by the hon. Gentleman the Member for North Camberwell, with whose general line he did not altogether agree, but who on the question of the class of house to be provided laid down what he thought was a most admirable indication. In that series of questions the Local Government Board asked whether there was a want of proper accommodation for the working classes in the area of the local authority; had it led to overcrowding, and, if so, how many cases had been reported; for what classes of persons was such accommodation required; how far was the demand being met by private enterprise; and in particular, what was the number of houses for each class of such persons which were erected annually by private enterprise; and if action were to be taken under the Act, was it thought that the erection of houses for these classes by the local authority would tend to discourage private enterprise, and, if so, what was the reason for this conclusion? He wished to point out the enormous bearing which that series of questions had on the solution of the problem. It indicated that the central Authority was not going to be the passive recipient of schemes which they would either criticise, remodel, or endorse; but that it recognised that in an administrative sense if it was to do its duty it must survey what was passing in provincial cities in connection with this question. The question of slums and insanitary houses was one thing, and the general question of the deficiency of housing accommodation was another. In London, which was in some respects in quite an unique position in this matter, the practice had been to take a particular slum district, composed very often of houses structurally sanitary, and under Part 1 of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, or under some local Act, to demolish the houses, and imagine that that was solving the Housing Question. It was perfectly clear that by such action so far from solving the housing question they were accentuating the very difficulty and trouble from which these large cities had suffered; and what was imperative, he thought, was that the Central Department in administering the Act should not only require that adequate accommodation should be provided to replace the houses that were pulled down, but should go further and demand that that accommodation should suit the capacities, the pockets, and the other conditions of those who were dispossessed from slums which the municipalities destroyed. The fact of the matter was that those people who were turned out of these slums could not by any possibility pay the rents which were in many cases required by the municipalities, for their buildings, and he thought he might claim for Liverpool that alone amongst the municipalities of England,—to say nothing of London which of course had not attempted to deal with this question at all—Liverpool provided dwellings suitable for those who were turned out of their slum dwellings at rents which they could afford to pay, and within reasonable distance of their work.

He knew perfectly well that other municipalities in this matter were merely making, as they made sometimes in Liverpool, experiments. In Manchester—and this after all was a matter of administration, because the Central Department could, if it liked, put this matter right—they had in the Angel Meadow district closed innumerable houses and left them as a standing eyesore to the whole of the city. People had been turned out into the streets, and they held indignation meetings on account of the pitiable condition in which they found themselves, and the answer of the Manchester Corporation was: "Oh, you must go to Blackley." Well, Blackley was a new model estate which the Corporation was building on the outskirts of Manchester, and these people who had been turned out of Angel Meadow were perverse enough to say that they had no means to pay the cost of getting there, and if they got there they could not pay the rent of the fine new model dwellings which the Manchester Corporation was putting up. Therefore it really came down to this urgent question, that the municipality which undertook the responsibility of abolishing a slum and turning out of the houses—to which these people were accustomed—the slum dwellers, should, when it took this responsibility, recognise it, and recognise further that its first responsibility was not to some superior class of artisan who tenanted the house at an enhanced rent, but to the very people who had been turned out, who were the legitimate objects of municipal enterprise—and doubly legitimate because the municipality which catered for these people would find no competition as regarded private enterprise. It was perfectly true that no Department could coerce local authorities in this matter. They had the previous day a most interesting debate, which involved, to a certain extent, the relations between central Departments and local authorities, or, at any rate, between the House and local authorities. He desired, for his part, to disclaim utterly any trace of that spirit which seemed occasionally to reign on the Benches where he stood, of underlying antagonism to these great municipalities, whose burdens were only known to the men who had to face them, and who, it might be, in facing such problems as they were discussing that day experimented in an ill-advised fashion, but, at any rate, were not apathetic or indifferent to the responsibilities they had undertaken. Might he suggest to the central Departments represented there, both the Home Office, but more particularly the Local Government Board, that they should take a little more responsibility in the matter of the policy which was being pursued by the great provincial municipalities. These municipalities had not arrived at any clear or coherent policy on this question. They had not even decided the elementary question for what class of tenant they were going to cater; they were perfectly willing to pull down the slums.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member appears to me to be discussing the question of what is the duty of the local authorities, and how they perform it. That is not admissible on this question. The hon. Member admits that the Government cannot take any initiative on this matter, and he must confine himself, if he is discussing the action of the municipal authorities, to some alleged neglect of duty by the Government in respect of what is done by the authorities.

*MR. AUSTIN TAYLOR said he was leading up to this point, that of course the central Department now took this initiative when it insisted upon a certain percentage of accommodation being provided in case a slum was disturbed and the inhabitants thrown out, and he was going to suggest that they might go a little further, as indicated by Dr. Macnamara, and say not only should accommodation be provided, but the accommodation should be allocated to those who were dispossessed. In that sense they would, at any rate, force the municipality to face the question of doing something to bring them a little nearer, not to the solution of the whole problem, but to the practical solution of the slum problem, which was the real problem for the municipalities to deal with. He did not desire for a moment to travel into wider aspects of this question. He quite felt that this was a question merely of administration, though he desired to urge the central Department to exercise a guiding spirit in regard to the large municipalities all over the country. It was really because he recognised on this question, while everybody wished something to be done, each municipality was doing something different. No coherent policy had yet been achieved and he might say that millions were being wasted in experiments which gave no practical result, but which if superintended and collated by the chiefs in London might ultimately be fruitful in building up some saner and wiser policy.

*MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil) said the hon. Member for Clitheroe had asked him to draw attention to the case of Darwen. The local authorities, there it appeared, had entered into a building scheme; they had certain by-laws and desired to apply those by-laws to the buildings now in progress and those proposed to be erected, but the Local Government Board had insisted upon their own by-laws being applied, with the result that the local authority had had to put the rent up by a shilling a week more than they would otherwise have charged, and a charge had consequently to be made upon the rates. There was no dispute as to the responsibility resting with the local authorities in this matter, but what they complained of was that the Local Government Board placed unnecessary restrictions and restraints in the way. An instance of that occurred in his own constituency where overcrowding had become very serious. There building had been delayed for a number of years owing to a conflict between the local authority and the Local Government Board. At Wellington, at this moment, a similar conflict was going on. There owing to the influx of population, owing to new works being started in the neighbourhood, a building scheme had been entered into, but it was discovered that the rent which would have to be charged was far beyond that which could be charged for houses erected by private enterprise, and the local authority were now asking the central authority to vary the conditions in order that they might charge a rent such as these people could afford to pay. He thought the Local Government Board should give some attention to these matters. In Scotland, loans had to be repaid in from thirty to thirty-four years, but for loans applicable to England the period of repayment might be extended to sixty years. In Scotland, owing to loans for housing having to be repaid in thirty or thirty-four years, the authorities were placed under a serious disability, because it necessitated the rents being 1s. 6d. or 2s. per week higher than would be the case if a forty-five or fifty years limit was allowed. Speaking generally, he hoped the Local Government Board would not relax its regulations concerning the quality of the houses to be built; otherwise slums would simply be recreated. No greater mistake could be made than to pull down houses and build dwellings which in fifteen or twenty years would be as bad as those they had displaced. The suggestion of the hon. Member for the Toxteth Division that the Local Government Board should insist on local authorities building houses only for slum dwellers for whom private enterprise could not provide ought not to be followed. Instead of playing the part of scavenger to the private housebuilder, and taking charge of the refuse, out of whom they could not make a profit, the Local Government Board should insist on the local authorities building houses which would cater for the better class of artisans. By that means housing vacancies would be created right down to the lowest slums, and the competition of the municipality would tend to reduce rents all round.

SIR GEORGE BARTLEY (Islington, N.) regretted that this matter could not be discussed as a whole. The housing question was the basis of all social improvements, and all Members were anxious that legislation and the action of the Local Government Board and the Home Office should tend in the direction of promoting the well-being of the homes of the people. The question of loans and the action of the Local Government Board in relation thereto was of considerable importance. The subject was largely affected by cost, and to go thoroughly into the housing question would require millions of money in London alone. The proposal of the hon. Member for North Camberwell that the repayment of loans should be greatly extended, and that no repayments should be made for the first few years, would not promote the real object they had in view. It seemed as though they were most anxious to house the people better, but to throw the burden on somebody else. He hoped the Local Government Board would not give way in that direction; it would tend not only to increase the rates, but to increase them out of all proportion to the benefit secured. This was not in any way a party question, and many Members felt that to go on increasing the powers of the Local Government Board, and of municipalities, really retarded the movement by discouraging private enterprise, by which he believed this work should largely be done. He hoped some comprehensive measure would be brought forward, which while promoting in every way the provision of improved and sanitary homes, would not saddle the burden on posterity, but deal with the question in an honest and straightforward manner.

LORD EDMUND FITZMAURICE (Wiltshire, Cricklade) said there was no proposition which on the surface appeared more natural, and therefore was more popular, than that they should call on the Local Government Board or the Home Office to introduce legislation by which in all cases the repayment of loans for housing purposes should be spread over a longer period. Looking at the question strictly from the point of view of what a Government Department might be called upon to do, he thought these questions should be looked at from a local rather than a general point of view. So far as the Metropolis, and cities like Glasgow and Edinburgh were concerned, there could be no objection to extending the period of repayment, because the tendency was for land in those places to increase in value. But that proposition could not be laid down for the country at large. The position in, say, a mining district was totally different. There the houses would be occupied by people dependent on an uncertain industry, and if a loan were granted for sixty or eighty years, and the principal industry became impaired, the district might be reduced to a position of almost permanent bankruptcy, being saddled with a debt it was unable to repay. He would not object to there being vested in the Local Government Board or the Home Office a discretionary power to raise the outside limit, but he hoped it would never be understood by the Department concerned that it was to relax that extreme vigilance which he believed was of the utmost importance to the ratepayers both of the present and of the future. They might be piling up a debt upon posterity, affecting them more as householders than ratepayers, heavier than any benefit which might accrue from the houses to be erected.

He wished to touch upon one other point which he thought was germane to this Vote. The hon. Member for North Camberwell, and the hon. Member who introduced the Motion to the House, had spoken of very great evils which existed owing to there being a divided jurisdiction between the offices of the two right hon. Gentlemen sitting opposite. He thought one of the first things which ought to be done was to bring into the House some measure for the consolidation of the law upon this subject. One of the greatest difficulties in the small urban communities arose owing to the immense confusion of the law, and however anxious they might be to put themselves into communication with the Local Government Board, they found themselves beaten by the extreme complexity of the laws they had to administer. There was no way of dealing with the housing of the working classes until the present law was simplified. Taking the question as a whole, he thought the consolidation and simplification of the existing law was almost as important as any amendment of the law. They had been promised an alteration of the rule under which the two Departments dealing with this question introduced legislation—he was alluding to the proposal in regard to Consolidation Bills. He did not see how they were to get what they wanted in regard to the housing of the working classes, unless some comparatively simple legislative enactment were carried which he who ran might read, instead of clerks, surveyors, and medical officers having to find their way through dozens of Acts of Parliament. He hoped that the Cabinet Ministers concerned would do all they could to induce the Government to proceed with the Standing Order which was promised last year, and which appeared to have been dropped because one hon. Member opposite chose to state that he objected to Consolidation Orders, although that hon. Member, he believed, stood absolutely by himself upon the question.

*SIR J. DICKSON-POYNDER (Wiltshire, Chippenham) thought the House was indebted to his hon. friend for having brought this question forward. Although the Amendment was rather formidable, he was sure his hon. friend would be the first to admit that he did not wish to bring any serious charge against the two Departments of the service. Judging from the speeches which had been made, no quarter of the House appeared to entertain any great feeling of antagonism to either of the Departments concerned. As a Member of the County Council who had been in touch with this question for some years past, he wished to say that every member of the London County Council Committee fully recognised the manner in which both Departments and both Ministers had taken up this question, and the sympathy and generosity with which they had treated the Council with regard to housing. This Amendment confined the discussion to very narrow limits, and they could not deal with the wider questions which were connected with this subject. They could only deal with the administration of the Acts themselves, and the power the Ministers had over local authorities. The duty of the local authority had been divided into two branches; first, the administration under the Acts which gave power to purchase land, and secondly that part which dealt with the clearance of slum areas. He did not think anything now stood in the way of local authorities purchasing land and building upon those sites, but it was rather with regard to the latter branch of the subject that he asked for the attention of the Home Secretary. During the last twenty-seven years there had been under the old Metropolitan Board of Works and the London County Council no less than thirty-four slum areas cleared from London, and they had cost no less than £3,000,000, of which some £2,200,000 was a dead loss to the ratepayers of the Metropolis. He thought the time had arrived when the clearance of these areas should be dealt with by some other means than those at present in practice; and some less extravagant and expensive system should be devised by which London could be cleared of slum areas without this immense imposition of burdens upon the ratepayers. He asked his right hon. friend to use his discretion under the Act in the future with regard to Part 1 schemes, by which he could direct or advise the local authority after clearing an area to sell it at its commercial value, and purchase other land on the outskirts of London for sites to accommodate the people who had been displaced.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member is now discussing the action of local authorities.

*SIR J. DICKSON-POYNDER said he was only showing the immense charge put upon the rates with a view to asking the Home Secretary whether in future he could not guide local authorities rather in the direction of selling the central areas and utilising the money to purchase larger areas outside. Undoubtedly it would be very difficult to obtain communication with the outskirts, but every year Bills were being passed for the construction of underground railways, and in a very short time it was to be hoped, as the result of the Commission now sitting, there would be adequate communication with the outskirts to convey people from the centre to the outside of London at a small cost and without undue delay.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member is discussing a much wider question than the one raised by this Motion. The question is whether the administration of the Housing Acts by the Departments concerned is unsatisfactory and defective.

*SIR J. DICKSON-POYNDER asked the Home Secretary to devise some mode by which they would be able to clearly define in the future what was sanitary and insanitary property. He knew it was a very delicate question for a Minister in any way to advise those gentlemen who discharged judicial duties. But there was no doubt a great lack of uniformity, due to different tribunals dealing with this question of the closing of insanitary houses.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, Order! It is obvious that this cannot be a question of the administrative duties of the two Departments.

*SIR J. DICKSON-POYNDER said he was afraid the Motion was so very prescribed that it left him very little to say. He hoped that later on when the question of the salary of the Minister came up he should have an opportunity of bringing this subject before the House. He asked the President of the Local Government Board to look into another question. Under the present arrangement, when an area was cleared it was necessary for another site to be appropriated by the Borough Council to house a number of people. That appropriation, he believed, came under the individual consent of the President of the Local Government Board if it was taken separately from the scheme. But the Local Government Board insisted at present on taking it altogether, and this necessitated coming to the House for a Provisional Order. If this was insisted on by the President of the Local Government Board, there would be a delay of six or eight months, and building would be stopped during that period. Possibly this had not come under the notice of the right hon. Gentleman, and if he would give it his favourable consideration he was sure that it would be of the greatest value to the Borough of St. Pancras.

MR. WALTER LONG: In regard to the point raised by my hon. friend the Member for the Chippenham Division, I have no doubt that I shall be able to find a way to overcome the difficulty to which he has referred. With reference to the general debate, I am not surprised that many speakers on both sides of the House have sought to apologise for the hon. Member for Hoxton, and the form of apology is that the hon. Member's Resolution does not really mean what it professes to mean. One of my hon. friends went further in the excess of his zeal, and sought to show that the hon. Member for Hoxton did not mean what he said. My hon. friend goes a little too far when he give him so much protection, because the Resolution is a perfectly definite one. It is that the Housing Acts have failed because of maladministration on the part of the Local Government Board, though no evidence has been produced in support of the charge. Among the statements my hon. friend made was that the Local Government Board have not shown initiative. He went on to say that there was nobody in the Local Government Board charged with the sole care of the Housing Acts. Those were the grounds on which he rested his statement that the Local Government Board had failed in its administration of the Housing Acts, and he said it was on account of these circumstances that at all events some of the present difficulties were due. I do not wonder that hon. Members found it difficult to continue the debate within the rules of order. It is not only because the rules of order have dogged their footsteps that they found this difficulty; it is because they have not got the evidence necessary in order to prove the charge stated in the Resolution. I do not hesitate to say that the debate has been of a general character. We have heard a great deal about initiative on the part of Government Departments, and about the necessity of some means being found to meet some particular difficulty. When I hear these statements I rub my eyes and wonder whether I am asleep at this period of Parliamentary history. What has been the cry of Parliament ever since I have been here? What has been one of the main propositions on which hon. Members have sought to enter Parliament? Has it been for increased centralisation on the part of Government Departments? Has not the tendency fo legislation been more and more to throw into the hands of Government Departments less and less work, and to give more and more power to the local authorities? But if the local authorities are to be clothed with more power, they must be trusted to exercise initiative of their own, or decentralisation becomes a farce. Initiative must come from the locality which is familiar with the facts and difficulties in a way that no Government Department can be. The local authority, moreover, is spending the money of its own ratepayers, and not the money of the nation; I very much doubt whether suggestions that a Government Department should exercise parental supervision in this matter are likely to find favour even with the small municipalities, and I am certain they would be rejected with contempt by the larger. It is all very well to talk of a central department exercising initiative. How is it to be done? My hon. friend says the Local Government Board have been apathetic, and have not taken the trouble to administer the Acts with vigour. What evidence has he brought in support of the charge? If, when he tells us that we have nobody at the Local Government Board charged with the sole control of the Housing Acts, he means that we have no one who has nothing else to do but to look after the housing problem, he is perfectly right, and I can assure him that he would find he was profoundly mistaken if he sought to break up the work of the Department in that ridiculous way.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: The right hon. Gentleman has misunderstood me. I advocated that there should be an Intelligence Department, which would be able to gather information from all parts of the country, and place it at the service of local authorities.

Mr. WALTER LONG: My hon. friend says that he wants an Intelligence Department. What proof does he advance that there is not an Intelligence Department now? He was answered by the speech of the hon. Member for Camberwell, who has referred to the circulars issued to local authorities asking for specific answers to specific questions. How does he think those circulars could have been drawn up and issued if the Local Government Department were so lacking in intelligence as he holds it to be? There is a branch of the Department, with a highly competent assistant-secretary at its head, which is charged, among other duties, with the supervision of all housing work; and in character and ability the officials of that branch are deserving of all commendation. I was glad to hear the remark that fell from the hon. Member for Camberwell in regard to the enthusiasm of the officials of the Local Government Board and of the Home Office. An hon. Member has brought forward a case at Darwen which is an admirable illustration of the sort of complaint that is made against the Local Government Board in this matter. It is said that in that case the Department refused to allow the local authority to make its own by-laws, and imposed upon it the by-laws of the Local Government Board. The fact is that the local authority had their own code of by-laws, drawn by themselves and approved by the Local Government Board. But when they came to undertake a housing scheme the local authority proposed to disregard their own by-laws, two of which were very important. That means that if the Local Government Board had not told them that they must obey the law so long as the law is what it is, the local authority could have continued to impose their by-laws on private persons engaged in building in the locality, while claiming exemption for themselves. If they think the by-laws are unsound or unsatisfactory, let them ask that a new code of by-laws shall be substituted, but as long as the by-laws are in force, surely it is rather strong to accuse the Department of red tape, because they say that the local authority must obey the law.

MR. SHACKLETON (Lancashire, Clitheroe): They did not want to make by-laws for their own special benefit. I was a Member of the Corporation at the time, and the only question was whether the by-laws applied to ordinary buildings should be applied to the Corporation buildings.

MR. WALTER LONG: I am afraid the hon. Gentleman is mistaken. Although he was a member of the Corporation at the time, there is often considerable misunderstanding as to what precisely occurs on these occasions. I believe it is exactly the same with many other cases which are brought up in this form, and which upon investigation turn out to be as I have described in this case. The Local Government Board have no by-laws, and they have no power to impose any on local authorities. Before by-laws can be put in force they must be adopted by the local authorities. My hon. friend, the Member for Hoxton, referred to this question. He said that many of the by-laws were of an excessive character, and that they imposed great restrictions. He blamed the Local Government Board for it. Will the House believe it? Hardly ever is a set of by-laws submitted by a local authority to the Local Government Board for confirmation without it being necessary to call attention to the fact that many of them are of a questionable character, and may operate severely on the locality and be restrictive of local enterprise.

That brings me to the point raised by the hon. Member for Camberwell who said he hoped we should adopt one of the recommendations of the Committee of which he was a member, to take care that buildings are not of a pretentious character; that they are suited to the purses of those who provide them, and of those who are to live in them. That has been the object of the Department ever since it has been responsible for the Acts. We are constantly endeavouring to cut down the amount which the local authorities are seeking to spend under this head, and to curtail unnecessary extravagance. But I am quite sure that the hon. Gentleman himself would be one of the first to advise us not to weaken in the smallest degree those by-laws which are concerned either with sanitary work or what I call the social comfort of the people who are to live in the houses. We have never proposed to impose regulations which would involve work of a merely ornamental character or to gratify an idle fancy. It is perfectly true that we have insisted on a certain cubic space per inhabitant. I do not think the hon. Gentleman would desire that model buildings put up at the public expense should be of such a character as to make it impossible for women and children to live healthy lives in them and get sufficient fresh air. I do not think that he would desire that the sanitary arrangements should be other than satisfactory and of a modern character. These are the kind of requirements that the Local Government Board make upon the local authorities. It is perfectly true that we have more than once insisted that in these small dwellings there shall be properly ventilated cupboards, where food can be kept shut up out of the way when not in use. Will anybody pretend that these are unreasonable requirements to make on the local authorities? We are entirely at one with the hon. Member for North Camberwell that, as far as possible, these buildings should be of the most economical character. It should never be forgotten by those who have to erect them that these buildings are erected at the public expense, and are intended for people to live in who want solid and sanitary rather than ornamental buildings. The hon. Member for Hoxton said there had been apathy in the Department in connection with this housing question, but he did not support his contention with any evidence. I only speak of the time for which I have been responsible, but so far as I know—and I believe there has been no change in this respect—everything that it is possible for us to do has been done within the last three or four years to assist the local authorities in their difficult and responsible duties. I do not think that any charge of negligence can be fairly brought against us.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: What about information?

Mr. WALTER LONG: What does my hon. friend want? He tells us that it is matter of common knowledge that no explanation has been given as to the character of all that has been done by the local authorities, and as to the loans that they have incurred; but so far as I know there is no information which we have not given. It is not information in regard to the difficulties connected with housing that the hon. Gentleman wants. He wants, as we all do, information as to the way in which these difficulties ought to be removed. The hon. Member for Camberwell asked some questions as to the Report of the Committee on Housing and on the subject of area and loans. In regard to area the recommendation of the Committee has been the policy of our Department, which has always been willing to deal with the area in the manner suggested in the Report. In regard to loans, as the law stands sixty years is the maximum period, and the Department have interpreted it as meaning sixty years for the most durable portions of the work. It will be my duty to submit proposals to Parliament on this subject in a Bill which will be introduced in a short time, and I must reserve what I have to say on it until that opportunity arises. While I am most anxious to remove any practical difficulty, either in connection with loans or any other part of the administration of the law with regard to housing, it seems to me that the Department in its proposals must have regard to the views of those who believe that there is a necessity for municipal economy, as well as for the opinions of those who believe that there is a demand for a greater opportunity to spend money. I cannot admit on behalf of the Department that there is any justification for the charge contained in the hon. Member for Hoxton's Amendment. Everything the Department could do within the law they have done; and I have asked hon. Members times without number to bring details before me so that no effort should be spared on the part of the Department and myself to help them. It is therefore an unfair charge to bring forward, and it ought not to be made unless there is much stronger evidence to support it. After all, it is not a charge against the Government. Governments come and go, but a charge of this kind is against the public officials, who are men of the highest ability, of the utmost devotion to duty, and who are constantly engaged in the examination of these questions. I venture to say that so far from condemning them we ought to be grateful to them for the prudent and careful manner in which they deal with this grave and difficult question.

Question put, and agreed to.

Original Question again proposed.

THE TRUCK ACTS.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE said he wished very briefly to call attention to a matter which concerned the administration of the Truck Acts by the Home Office, but especially to an attempt which was being made in the North-west of Scotland to compel the workmen of a certain company to sign themselves out of the provisions of these Acts. At Ballachulish, in Argyllshire, there was a quarry employing between 300 and 400 men. The custom had been for the manager and workmen to combine jointly in the appointment of a medical man, whose salary was deducted from the wages of the men. Last year a dispute arose between the manager and the doctor who was given notice of dismissal. The workmen protested against their medical officer being dismissed without their sanction or authority, and refused to allow the company to make deductions from their wages in order to pay the doctor's salary. They now contributed to a voluntary fund, and had re-engaged the same medical man to attend upon them and their families. He might be allowed to say that there was an action at law now pending against the doctor who, in his agreement with the company, had promised not to set up practice in the neighbourhood. The workmen said that that clause in the agreement was put in without their knowledge or consent. The workmen were only allowed to continue in employment if they signed an agreement permitting the salary of the medical officer to be deducted from their wages. They objected to do this, and because they objected they were locked out, and had been out since the end of December. It was well enough known that under the provisions of the Truck Act any agreement enabling an employer to make deductions from his workmen's wages might be entered into voluntarily, but if the employer made such an arrangement a condition of employment it became a violation of the Truck Act. The mines inspector for the West of Scotland inquired into this case, but so far as he was aware no proceedings had yet been instituted. It might be said that the letter of the Act had not been violated, inasmuch as the men were not in employment. The point to which he wanted to direct attention was that the workmen could only find employment on condition that they signed the agreement to which he referred. If that were not making the agreement a condition of employment then he did not know the meaning of the words. There was no dispute about wages, hours of work, or anything else. The only difficulty was that the workmen refused to sign the agreement. It seemed to him that two Departments were concerned in this matter. First of all the Home Office, and next the Board of Trade. The Home Secretary should make it clear that this attempt to compel workmen to sign an agreement as a condition of employment was illegal, and, if the right hon. Gentleman did that, he did not think it would be persisted in. Then the Board of Trade might send down an investigator to inquire into and report on all the circumstances of the dispute. It looked at present as if the dispute would degenerate into a struggle similar to that at the Penrhyn Quarries. One dispute of that kind was enough to be proceeding at once; and it was with the view to preventing another that he brought these facts to the notice of the House and the Government, and asked the Government to take such action as their powers might permit, in order to prevent the infraction, if not of the strict letter, at all events of the spirit of the Truck Act. The men claimed the protection of the Truck Act, and said that they should not be obliged to sign the agreement, but that if a deduction were made in their wages they could sue for its recovery. They did not, however, desire to resume work under false pretences, and be compelled to sign what they believed to be an illegal agreement. He submitted it was within the power of the Secretary of State for the Home Department and the President of the Board of Trade to take such steps as would prevent the dispute from degenerating into a long struggle. He begged to move.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member cannot move an Amendment, one Amendment having been negatived.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. AKERS DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's) said he had to confess that this matter was not present to his mind at the moment. It was a question which would involve a considerable amount of care and consideration; especially as he gathered from the hon. Gentleman that an action at law was pending. But he could promise that very careful consideration would be given to it, not only by himself, but also by his right hon. friend the President of the Board of Trade; he could assure the hon. Gentleman that no time would be lost by him in personally looking into the matter. He would probably be prepared in a few days to inform the hon. Gentleman if he asked a Question on the subject, what action it was proposed to take.

CIVIL SERVICE UPPER DIVISION.

MR. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil) said he desired to direct the attention of the Government to the Amendment which stood in his name. He wished the Secretary to the Treasury to understand that in bringing the matter forward he was not acting in any hostile spirit. It had been repeatedly recommended by Royal Commissions that the salaries of the upper division of officials in the Civil Service should be made uniform; and, although he should like to see that done, he only asked an assurance that the salaries of the upper division officials in two very important Departments, the Local Government Board and the Board of Trade, should be assimilated as far as possible to the recommendations of the Commissions. This was a matter which not only affected individuals, but also affected efficiency in perhaps the two most important Departments of the State. He should like to trace the development of the upper division of the Civil Service. Fifty years ago the Civil Service was in a very different position to what it was now. Then, there was no division between the intellectual work and the clerical routine work, and men of high qualifications were not attracted to the Service. In 1854 Sir Charles Trevelyan and Sir Stafford Northcote were appointed to report on its condition, and they said—

> "Admission into the Civil Service is indeed eagerly sought for, but it is for the unambitious and the indolent and incapable that it is chiefly desired. Those whose abilities do not warrant an expectation that they will succeed in the open professions where they must encounter the competition of their contemporaries, and those whom indolence of temperament or physical infirmities unfit for active exertions, are placed in the Civil Service, where they may obtain an honourable livelihood with little labour and with no risk."

To-day the Civil Service was one of the finest in the world. The men in it were largely drawn from public schools and universities, and from an educational point of view compared favourably with men in other avocations, and certainly with the average member of the so-called learned professions. The Commissioners recommended in 1854 (1) The separation of intellectual and mechanical labour, and (2) The selection of clerks by open competition. These two principles had ever since been regarded as essential, and were the foundation on which subsequent Royal Commissions reported. In 1835 the Civil Service Commission was established to examine candidates; and later, by Order of Council, almost unrestricted competitive examination was made the door of entry into the Civil Service. In 1874 the Playfair Commission was appointed to consider the organisation of the Civil Service, and that Commission reaffirmed the recommendations of Sir George Trevelyan and Sir Stafford Northcote, and recommended a uniform scale of pay throughout the service. These are the words—

> "The rate of remuneration to be paid in the Higher Division should be such as would attract men of a liberal education, who would otherwise go into the open professions. These rates of pay should be uniform throughout the service."

In 1886, a very strong Royal Commission was appointed, known as the Ridley Commission, which again reaffirmed the recommendations of the Playfair Commission, and used these words—

> "We think it an object of the most serious importance that men of the same standard of liberal education as those who now adopt the open professions, should be attracted into the public service and trained there for selection for the highest permanent posts."

It was this scale he asked the Treasury now to adopt in these two Departments. He did not think it had been adopted altogether in the War Office and the Admiralty, but it had been adopted in the Scotch Office and the Irish Office, and he maintained that the Local Government Board and the Board of Trade were infinitely more important than either the Scotch or Irish Offices, in which this scale had been adopted. He would like to know why the recommendation had not been carried out. He had endeavoured to find that out and had asked the predecessor of the hon. Gentleman this question—

> "To state the grounds on which any distinctions are drawn between the higher officials of the various Departments having regard to the fact that they are all recruited by the same examination and for the same class of work."

The Postmaster-General, who then occupied the position of the hon. Gentleman, in reply referred him to Parliamentary Paper 575 of 1894 for a full account of the action taken on the Report of the Royal Commission, and of the reasons for it, and stated that no change was contemplated at the present time. Upon referring to that Paper he found this—

> "The Treasury does not contemplate absolute uniformity of scale, but in cases where Departments have made very large reductions of numbers, has felt justified in improving the scale of salary so as to approximate more closely to the figures recommended by the Royal Commission."

On the principle, he supposed, of less work and more pay. In the previous year, or the year before that, he put a question on this subject to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board who replied—

> "The examination for the clerks of the upper division of the Local Government Board is the same as that for clerks of the same division in the offices of the Secretaries of State, with the exception of the Foreign Office, and so far as I am aware the class of work performed by the clerks in these several offices is similar in character. Some reduction in the number of the upper division clerks in the Local Government Board was made between 1884 and 1897, but in that year the large growth in the work rendered it essential that a considerable increase should be made in the staff of the office, including the upper division."

But the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, the present Postmaster-General, subsequently said that

> "All clerks of the upper division are recruited by examinations on the same subjects. Vacancies in the offices of the Secretaries of State are filled by the most successful candidates, or by the transfer from other Departments of officers who have shown exceptional merit. In the opinion of the Treasury the work in the offices of the Secretaries of State, taken as a whole, requires higher qualifications than does that of other public departments."

So that the House would see that the Financial Secretary of that day held an exactly contrary opinion. He thought the distinctions drawn between the offices of the Secretaries of State and the other big Departments was largely historical and not real; largely a matter of tradition rather than of fact. In his opinion it was opposed both to the interests of the State, and the interest of the Departments that there should be this distinction drawn in the scale of the salaries paid.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said that this question was raised at considerable length before the Reorganisation Committee of the Local Government Board, of which he was a Member, and that was his only excuse for intervening. At the time it was raised it came as a surprise to him, and he could never understand why an upper division clerk in the Local Government Board, or the Board of Trade, was pecuniarily in a worse position than the same class of clerk in the offices of a Secretary of State. The point he desired to force on the Secretary to the Treasury, independent of those which had been emphasised by the hon. Gentleman opposite, was that this system worked prejudicially in the case of the Local Government Board and the Board of Trade. There was a constant state of transfer going on. Clerks who had learnt their business in those offices, when they found they could get better pay in the offices of a Secretary of State naturally used all the influence in their power to get transferred; the result was the great offices of State got the best men, who had learned their work in other Departments, whilst the Local Government Board and the Board of Trade had to bring in men who had to be taught their business, which was most prejudicial to those Departments.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (MR. HAYES FISHER, Fulham) said he cordially joined in the tribute that had been paid by the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydvil to the Civil Service. Those who had had anything to do with the civil administration could not but admire the zeal, ability, and courtesy which those gentlemen brought to the administration of their Departments. The hon. Gentleman did not defend his Motion at all on any deterioration of the Civil Service, or the falling off of the high standard of excellence for which the country had so long been accustomed to look. The high testimony which had been given by the hon. Gentleman was amply borne out by the statistics upon this subject, which showed that it was very rarely that any one obtained a position in the upper division of the Civil Service who had not at least one first class to his credit at his university. He frankly admitted that if the hon. Gentleman looked for anomalies, both in the pay and the prizes of the Civil Service, he would find them. The British Constitution was full of anomalies, and it would be strange indeed if those who were responsible for its administration had not some taint of the disease. He admitted that if they took the pay-sheets of the upper division of the Civil Service and looked through the pay and prizes offered to candidates that came into our big Departments, of which there were nineteen, it would be found that the pay and the prizes varied in an extraordinary degree. Some inequalities existed that it would be very difficult to give a reason for. There were nineteen big offices, in five of which, namely, the Treasury, the Colonial Office, the Home Office, the Scotch Office, and the Irish Office, the commencing salary was £200; in the other fourteen it was £150. What the hon. Gentleman now sought to do was to raise the initial salary of the juniors entering the upper division of the Civil Service from £150 to £200. But though the hon. Member had limited his Motion to the Local Government Board and the Board of Trade, if he considered his arguments he would find that the case could not rest there; the hon. Gentleman said that he defied any one to prove that the work done in those two offices was of an inferior order to that done in the Colonial and Home Offices; but it would be equally difficult to prove that the work done was of a superior order to that done in the Admiralty and the War Office. The Treasury had already been approached by the clerks in the War Office, and they had complained that they were not given the same high salaries as were given in the Colonial Office. He thought the work of the Treasury was of a very high order, and he did not think anybody in that office was over-paid; but he could not say, nor could anyone else, that all the work done at the five great offices of State where higher salaries were paid was of a higher order than the work done at the Local Government Board or the Board of Trade. The hon. Member asked "Why not adopt a scheme of uniform pay?" The reason was pretty obvious. There was not the slightest ground for saying we did not get a good article for the price we paid. Then there was the Treasury argument of the cost. To pay 200 junior officials at the rate of from £150 to £200 a year would mean an additional expenditure of £10,000 per annum. Nor would it stop there. If the higher scale were adopted in these offices a formidable request for similar treatment would at once be made by first-class offices, which were somewhat analogous, such as the British Museum, and, adding other incidental expenses, an increase of £30,000 a year would probably have to be faced. That was certainly a matter for reflection, seeing that up to the present the country had obtained admirable service for the money now paid.

It was true that the Ridley Commission, on whose report the hon. Member had founded his argument, recommended a certain scale of salaries, but (in paragraphs 52 and 56) it also laid great stress on the fact that before that increased scale was adopted a large reduction ought to take place in the upper division of the Civil Service. The attitude then taken up by the Treasury was that, while not altogether averse to introducing for the junior officials the scale of the Ridley Commission, at all events in the largest Departments, they must insist on the upper division being largely cut down before they did so. Between 21st March 1890 and 18th December, 1893, in six of the largest Government Departments there were 112 vacancies in the upper division, of which the Departments themselves, in concert with the Treasury, said it was not necessary to fill up ninety-seven. That showed that the pressure brought to bear by the Ridley Commission, supported by the Treasury, had been instrumental in saving a great deal of money without sacrificing anything in the way of efficiency. He desired to take up the same attitude on the present occasion. While not thinking it necessary to apply one uniform standard to all the large offices, he did not take up a stubborn attitude of opposition to the extension of the system to some of the larger offices. Each office must be treated on its own merits and make out its own case, but the Treasury would naturally expect it to show that it had effected as much economy as it could reasonably be expected to do. As to the proposal to adopt the scale for the Board of Trade and the Local Government Board, he would remind his hon. friend the Member for South Tyrone that in 1897 he was a consenting party to keep the initial salary of the second class at £150.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said that on a Committee such as that to which the hon. Member referred there had to be a good deal of give and take on both sides, and most members had to consent to things which they did not think strictly fair in order to arrive at a general agreement.

MR. HAYES FISHER fully accepted the hon. Gentleman's explanation, perhaps he did not agree with that particular part of the Report. It was impossible not to recognise the ever-increasing value of the work done by the Board of Trade and the Local Government Board, and he hoped hon. Members would be satisfied with the statement that the Government had promised to appoint a Committee to inquire into the position and the duties of the Board of Trade and the Local Government Board, and to report whether any, and if so, what, alterations should be made in the constitution and status of those offices. It was impossible for the Government to accept a mandatory Motion to raise the initial salaries of the second class until this Committee had made its inquiry and issued its report. Speaking generally he might say that the Government would at any time be willing to consider the request of any of the big offices, on its own merits, for the application of the Ridley scale to the second class, but they would also insist that the Department should be willing to adopt in spirit and in substance the main recommendations of the Ridley Commission, so that for expenditure on the one side there would be reasonable economy on the other.

SCOTTISH FISHERIES.

*MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty) called attention to the inadequate policing of the seas around the coasts of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and to the serious losses sustained by the line fishermen through the depredations by illegal trawling. He was not opposed to trawling, there was plenty of room in the sea for both line fishermen and trawlers; but he did object to trawlers fishing within the three-mile limit prescribed by Parliament, and his complaint was of the lack of energy on the part of the Government in stopping illegal trawling. The cruisers at the disposal of the Scottish Fisheries Board were quite insufficient for the work. They were antiquated boats, with insufficient speed, whereas the trawlers could run at fourteen or fifteen knots. The Scottish Office would probably say that they had no funds at their disposal with which to provide further cruisers. But the Secretary for Scotland was a Member of the Cabinet, and it was his duty to go to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and continue to go until he got the money he required. He was afraid the Secretary for Scotland had too much of the modesty which characterised his countrymen. If only they could have the Colonial Secretary as Secretary for Scotland for three or four months! The right hon. Gentleman managed to get millions out of the Chancellor of the Exchequer for all sorts of purposes, but the poor fishermen round the coasts were allowed to starve because the Government would not put a stop to this illegal trawling. There were a large number of cruisers and torpedo boats at Portsmouth, Chatham, and Devonport, and why not let some of them patrol around the coast of Scotland? The Admiralty said those vessels were merely for fighting purposes, but what magnificent exercise it would be for the men to cruise in Scottish waters for the protection of the fishing grounds. He could not understand why the Government did not realise the importance of keeping the line fishermen in the fishing villages, instead of allowing them to be driven off to the large towns and cities. One of their finest national assets was the large body of Scottish fishermen. In the event of naval war, the Government would regret the loss of these men. There was plenty of room both for line fishermen and trawlers, but the trawlers ought to keep outside the three-mile limit. The Government took no steps to negotiate for the exclusion of foreign trawlers from the Moray Firth. The Scottish Office should endeavour to arrange for the exclusion of foreign trawlers from the Moray Firth. If

British trawlers registered under the Swedish or Norwegian flag, they were enabled as foreign trawlers to obtain access to the Moray Firth, and thus devastate the line fishing industry. He thought the Foreign Office ought to move in this matter, because the line fishermen were gradually being starved out, and the young men were being driven into the slums of large cities. The Scottish Office were much to blame for not obtaining additional and better cruisers for police purposes in order to put down these robbers of the sea.

Mr GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said the hon. Member had described the trawlers as villains and robbers, but he had not produced a single fact or argument to show in what way they interfered with the line fishermen.

Mr. WEIR said what he stated was that there was plenty of room for both, but let the trawler keep outside the three-mile limit.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: It was said that trawling interfered with the spat of the fish, but it had been shown that all the spawn did not lie upon the ground, but floated in the sea, and consequently trawling could not produce any effect upon it. No amount of trawling within the three-mile limit could interfere with the harvest of the line fishermen. If the line fisherman was not so prosperous, it might possibly be because he was not so industrious, and had not kept pace, as the trawler had, with the suggestions of modern science, and the requirements of modern fishing. The line fishermen might be using the old gear instead of the new. It was a cruel thing for the hon. Gentleman to make this violent attack, in which he used very strong words with regard to almost deserving class of men. He maintained that trawlers were comparatively few in number. The ground they trawled over was very large, and the same trawler could not scrape over more than a certain amount of ground. The hon. Member had spoken of trawling at fourteen miles an hour, but he believed that that was absolutely impossible, for the rate could scarcely ever exceed two or two and a half miles per hour.

Mr. WEIR: I said he could get away from a cruiser at fourteen knots an hour.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES doubted whether any trawler could achieve fourteen or fifteen knots per hour. He based his remonstrance upon the fact that the hon. Member had absolutely failed to show, and he defied him to show, that the trawler did any harm whatever to the line fishermen. There was another argument. The needs of this country with regard to fish were increasing year by year. Fish was an admirable and cheap article of diet, and the greater part of it was caught, and must be caught, by the trawler. Line fishermen were perfectly incapable of supplying the wants of this country, and most of the flat fish was caught by trawlers. If the large trawler did any mischief so did the small trawler, and the hon. Member had failed to show what mischief the trawler did. He thought it was rather cruel to make an attack upon the trawlers, who as sailors were some of the best men they could find, line fishermen were not to be compared with them. He always very much regretted to hear the annual attack which the hon. Member made upon the trawlers.

Mr. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith Burghs) said he did not join in any attack on the trawlers. There must, he thought, be some good reason for the Government enforcing the prohibition on trawling in the Moray Firth; but they wanted to know why that prohibition had not been rendered effective. If the trawlers in the Moray Firth were prohibited from landing their catch at English ports, as they were prevented landing them at Scotch ports, the prohibition would be effective. As to the damage done by trawling, he thought there could be no doubt that in narrow waters there was a risk that the trawlers might fish them out. In some parts of the Moray Firth he believed that had been done by having a great amount of netting going on in the narrow water, and that he believed to be the justification for the action of the Government.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: Does the hon. Member suggest that the trawler will fish all the fish out of the sea in the narrow waters?

Mr. MUNRO FERGUSON said he suggested that trawling would unduly reduce the stock of fish and almost fish the sea out. Everybody except the hon. Member opposite would give the Government credit for having some reason for putting a prohibition upon the Moray Firth. He should like to see the adoption of the prohibition which was put on by the Attorney-General many years ago. He thought a good purpose would be served if they could prohibit the catch being landed at English ports.

*Mr. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland) said the position taken on this question by the hon. Member for King's Lynn appeared to him to be peculiar. The hon. Member was evidently one of those who thought that the time was coming when all mankind would be sustained on a small tabloid, and when it would not be necessary for people to maintain themselves by the fish of the sea or the animals of the earth. There could be no question as to the mischief which was being done by trawlers on the north coast of Scotland. In the waters off the coasts of the islands which he represented they were worse than anywhere else. Nearly the whole of the men on board the trawlers were foreigners. There was hardly a British sailor amongst the number. They broke the law, if they possibly could, every day they went out. It was the companies who sent them out and who bribed the men to break the law that they wanted to get at. The Government had helped the Irish fishermen, and what was wanted now was that they should protect the Scotch fishermen against the depredations of the trawlers. When a trawler was convicted he might be fined £70 or £100. If he went to jail he was well rewarded when he came out by the company who employed him. If it was a question of pheasant poaching he had no doubt the sympathies of the hon. Member for King's Lynn would be in the other direction.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: Not at all. My sympathies are always with the poacher.

* Mr. CATHCART WASON said that after that statement he could well believe the hon. Member's sympathies were with the trawlers. He himself had some sympathy with the poacher who went out to take a few pheasants or partridges, or a deer. He did no harm to anybody. But the trawlers destroyed food. Supposing they did not interfere with the spat or spawn, at any rate they did countless damage by destroying the young fish, which were thrown overboard to pollute and poison the sea. The sea was not a reservoir from which innumerable quatities of fish could be brought up. Fish must have a resting space. It was simply a question of the reproductive forces of nature. The trawlers, in season and out of season, destroyed enormous quantities of food. It had been incontestably proved that an acre of water could produce more food for the people than an acre of land. If that was so why should they neglect this great industry in the way they were doing at the present time? Year by year our fishing was getting less and less. He did not wish to be accused of using strong adjectives, but the language used by the hon. Member for Ross and Cromarty would not express his views in regard to trawling. If he did so, he would have to go into superlatives, which would not be in accordance with the traditions of this House. A meeting of the great trawling companies had been held at Grimsby, and resolutions were passed unanimously that something must be done with regard to the depletion of fish in the North Sea. There was a unanimous opinion that the time had come when the Government should take action in the matter. The trawl owners, notwithstanding the illegal way in which their business was conducted, found that their dividends were decreasing year by year, and they had to build larger and faster boats. This was not a grievance only of a few fishermen in the north of Scotland. It was a question which affected the whole nation. There were fish enough in the sea practically to feed the whole country, and that was an important matter to be kept in view at a time when everybody was considering how the food supply of the country was to be maintained. It was a criminal, wasteful, and sinful thing — he could not get adjectives sufficiently strong for his purpose—to allow these fish to be destroyed in the way that was now done.

An alteration in the law was wanted. They did not want very much. What was suggested by the hon. Member for the Leith Burghs would go a long way to help them. It would go a long way to help if the Government would make the law such that the companies and the managers of the companies would have to go to jail and not the poor men who obeyed their behests. The hon. Member suggested that an arrangement should be made whereby the coastguardsmen would be employed to a greater extent than at present, because he believed they might be of the greatest service in protecting the interests of the fishermen. In many cases this would be a labour of love for them. They could render great assistance in the capture of trawlers if the Admiralty would furnish cruisers with small steam launches. If the Lord Advocate and the noble Lord the Secretary for Scotland would use the influence they had in the Government, they could get a better class of boats to protect the coasts than were employed at present. The trawlers could at a pinch go at ten or twelve knots a hour. These vessels had a constant habit of trawling inshore, and within the three-mile limit, a bag or sack being pulled over their numbers so that they could not be identified. Something might be done by insisting that trawlers should have their numbers clear and legible.

* THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): I am not going to interpose myself in the controversy between the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland and the hon. Member for King's Lynn, both of whom have proclaimed their poaching proclivities. I leave them to fight that matter out between themselves. The hon. Member for Ross and Cromarty has repeated on this occasion a speech which I have very often heard before, and which is very easy to make. It is exceedingly easy to declaim about the grievances of fishermen and to blame the Government, and I only welcome the appearance of the hon. Member for King's Lynn in this debate, because it has served to show that the subject is not an easy one, and that when it comes to a question of enforcing the law you will find that opinion is not all on one side. I had the honour to sit on a Committee of this House which passed the Undersized Fish Bill, and it was impossible to attend to the evidence given before that Committee without having borne in upon one's mind after all, how ill-informed even experts are in regard to this subject. I confess my own sympathies are entirely with the line fishermen, and I think that any ordinary person would come to the conclusion that it would be impossible to carry on trawling, as it is carried on now, without a certain amount of destruction of immature fish. But at the same time, when you come to the expert evidence the subject is not clear, and certainly it is not made any clearer by the results of the statistics gathered together in the interesting report which the Fishery Board of Scotland promulgated last year. But, after all, what has been the position of the Government in this matter? It is one of which the hon. Member for Ross and Cromarty cannot complain. We, at least, have done more than any other Government did before. We introduced that statutory limit of three miles all round the coast, and gave the power of closing large areas by by-laws. Now the hon. Member complains that the Moray Firth is not effectually shut. I am well aware of that. It is useless to ask us, on a matter of administration, to prohibit the landing of fish in the English ports, as we prohibit the landing in Scotch ports; and for the simple reason that we have statutory powers to do the one and not the other. The subject of the Moray Firth is greatly complicated by the fact that most of the fishing ground is beyond the territorial limits for really effective measures of control, and therefore we are necessarily hampered by the consideration that other nations have a right of fishing there. The hon. Member knows also that we have, as far as lies in our power, helped the movement for an International Inquiry into the supply of food fishes and its diminution, especially in the North Sea. But nobody thinks of the Moray Firth as a breeding ground for food fishes; the breeding grounds of food fishes are on the east side of the North Sea, and the International Commission, to which we have contributed a considerable amount of money, is pursuing investigations in regard to that subject. So far as the Scottish Office is concerned, I repudiate entirely any idea which is brought out by the declamation of the hon. Member for Ross and Cromarty that there has been the slightest degree of supineness on the part of the Fishery Board of Scotland. The

Board have done their very best to police the limits of the sea which, by law, they are entitled to police.

Mr. WEIR said that he did not complain of the Fishery Board, but of the want of fishery cruisers.

*Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: The question is where these cruisers are to come from. The Fishery Board does all that it can do up to the limit of its resources. The hon. Member suspects the Admiralty of want of enthusiasm in regard to this policing service of the sea; but I can assure him that that is not so. It is not altogether an easy piece of work to get a cruiser from the Admiralty, and, after all, the Admiralty may consider that their first duty is in another direction, and that the police protection of local interests is not their first duty. I would remind the hon. Member that he is here on somewhat dangerous ground, because undoubtedly, although everything that the Admiralty has done for us is no more than our right, if he drives us beyond our right, he will see that a great deal more has been done for Scotland in this regard than for Ireland. In other words we have not been shabbily treated in this matter by the Admiralty. The hon. Gentleman's complaint is not against our administration, but that we have not more money put at our disposal. I cannot give any hope to the hon. Gentleman that any more money shall be put at our disposal by the Treasury; but we will do in the future, as we have done in the past, our utmost to carry out his wishes.

Sir ROBERT REID (Dumfries Burghs) said that within the last year or so a fishing industry in the Solway Firth — one of the most dangerous sections in the whole sea-coasts of the United Kingdom—had been suppressed by a decision of the courts of law. He referred to the "whammling" fishing. It was a very serious and a sad thing for a number of men who could ill afford it to have their houses, their boats and nets, with which they carried on the most risky of all possible fisheries in the estuary of the Solway, rendered useless. This subject had been brought before a Royal Commission a few years ago; and that Commission were unanimous in recommending that this "whammling" system of fishing should be permitted within certain limits. That recommendation was approved of by the fishermen themselves, and indeed was partly suggested by the fishing interest. Nothing had been held out to them that anything would be done by the Government for these men whom he represented, and who were deserving of consideration. They had nothing to do now but to engage in trawling, which was specially prohibited in the Solway; and that had already led to fatal action. He was not going to trespass on the time of the House by suggesting methods which might be necessary for relieving the condition of these men. He based his case on the recommendations of the Royal Commission; he asked and wanted nothing more. He did not intend to press the Lord Advocate unduly to answer the question which he put to him; for an answer given to a question on a matter of this kind on the spur of the moment might be less favourable than if mature consideration were given to it. But he hoped that the Lord Advocate would take this matter into his mature consideration; and if he could be of the least service to his Lordship, he should be happy to offer it.

*Mr. BIGNOLD (Wick Burghs) said he understood the Lord Advocate to say that there was a divergence of opinion amongst the experts on the Immature Fish Committee, but he ventured to think there was one point on which most certainly the experts were all agreed. It was an admitted fact that the herring spawned on rocks in-shore, and the first act of the young fish when coming to life was to swim upwards and out to sea, whilst the first act of the round fish was to sink and swim to the shore. The consequence was that the trawler, with his trawl down, say, on an average of an hour and a quarter, would take in a very large proportion of young round fish, and when the trawl was drawn upon deck, it would be found to contain rocks, stones, wood, sea-flowers, and innumerable immature fish. At least one-third of the "take" of a trawler was so broken by the contents of the net that it was immediately heaved overboard to feed the dog-fish. One fact could not be traversed, and that was that the sea afforded a living to thousands of line and driftmen twenty years ago. Now contemporaneously with the appearance of the trawler it would not yield them sufficient to pursue their calling and pay their expenses. The three-mile limit had been in existence since 1839, but it was only during the last few years it had been so ruthlessly violated. The Moray Firth, closed to British trawlers though open to foreigners, had met with worse treatment than any other waters. Quite recently twenty British trawlers flying the Norwegian flag had dropped their trawls in the Firth. This was an unfriendly act for a friendly Government to attempt to excuse. He could endorse every word of the hon. Member for Ross and Cromarty as to the terrible misfortune which had overtaken this deserving industry. He understood the Government had made representations to Norway, and though the three-mile limit being a national obligation could not be altered without the signatories of the North Sea Convention, yet still he hoped that the Government would make a determined effort to save the line men by a better policing of the North Sea.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

SUPPLY.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1903-4.

To report Progress; and ask leave to sit again.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

IRELAND DEVELOPMENT GRANT [CONSOLIDATED FUND]—REPORT.

Resolution reported.

"That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of the Consolidated Fund, of an annual sum not exceeding £185,000 for providing a special grant to be used for the purposes of the Development of Ireland."

Motion made, and Question put, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid.) said he did not rise for the purpose of opposing the Grant, or of proposing any reduction in it, but there were circumstances connected with this grant which showed there was a change in the principle in dealing with Scotland and Ireland which had been introduced for the first time in this Resolution. This grant of £185,000 to Ireland was the equivalent to the grant given to England under the Education Act. As had already been pointed out by the Chief Secretary for Ireland, these grants were very unsatisfactory in their operation. One country having got a certain sum which it required for a particular purpose, the other two countries had to take an equivalent share whether they wished it or not for the same purpose, and whether they were prepared to spend it or not. As the Chief Secretary had pointed out, that system had lent itself to a great deal of extravagance; but that had always been the contention on the Liberal side of the House. From the very first they had opposed these grants in aid, and it had been pointed out repeatedly with greater emphasis than the right hon. Gentleman had laid upon it, that these grants led to extravagance owing to Scotland and Ireland having to take this money for a particular purpose whether they were prepared to spend it or not. The Liberal side of the House had always opposed these grants and when in power had never made them, which showed the view they took of the matter. The first dealing of the principle of the equivalent grant with regard to Scotland was in 1888, when Mr. Goschen was Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr. Goschen calculated that out of every £100 raised for Imperial purposes, £80 was raised by England, £11 by Scotland, and £9 by Ireland. Those were the proportions in which Mr. Goschen satisfied himself the revenue of the Imperial Government was contributed, and accordingly when England got money out of the Imperial purse for a particular purpose, for every £80 Scotland got £11 and Ireland £9, that being the proportion by which these respective countries contributed to the national purse. Upon that principle there had been about £10,000,000 of money coming year by year from the Imperial purse and being distributed among the local authorities. That was the principle almost universally acted upon. But the Government now introduced a very great change into the principle of applying the equivalent grant. The whole of these grants had been hitherto calculated on the basis of the proportions in which the money was raised for Imperial purposes. Up to the present that principle had never been called into account, but the Chief Secretary for Ireland had now introduced a new measure of calculation, between the three countries, for getting money out of the common purse, by calculating it on the basis of population. The Liberal side of the House had always opposed these grants, but if these grants were to be made, then he contended that the principle which Mr. Goschen adopted was the sound one. The Chief Secretary had told the House that in order to make up this £185,000 the principle was to be changed, and the calculation was to be made on the basis of population. The right hon. Gentleman in denouncing the principle of the calculation being made upon the percentage of the amount raised, had denounced his own Government, who were the persons who had introduced it. It was in operation with regard to £10,000,000 of money at the present moment, and if the right hon. Gentleman now said this principle was wrong, and that the basis of calculation in future should be on the basis of population, then he would ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say whether that should apply to the whole of these grants.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES said he hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would dissipate some uncertainties which had arisen in regard to this proposal. In the first place there was some uncertainty as to the amount of the grant to England. The Chief Secretary had stated that he thought it was £1,400,000 but figures had been referred to to show that it was a great deal more. He would be glad to know the real amount that was to be given to England, and how the proportion for Ireland was arrived at. This £185,000 which Ireland was to receive, and which was the equivalent of the grant to England under the Education Act, was not to be used for education until after a certain sum had been taken from it to be used for the flotation of the loan of £100,000,000. That suggested that it should be a charge for one year only, because the charges of flotation could not continue for ever, for there would be a time when all charges for this flotation must cease. But this Report which was before them to-day was to put this charge of £185,000 for ever on the Consolidated Fund. He submitted that that was a most improper and irregular way of charging the money. The Chief Secretary had told them that Ireland's share was to be regulated on the basis of population. The population varied from year to year; but, if they decided that a fixed sum should be issued annually for ever, they would depart from that principle. The proper way of granting money to the Sovereign was to grant it by yearly amounts. That was the only proper method known to the Constitution. There were certain charges, such as the Civil List and the salaries of the Judges, which were properly placed on the Consolidated Fund in order that they might be withdrawn from criticism in that House. They might be regarded as sacred, and they must be the first and indefensible charge on the revenue of the Empire. But that was not so in this instance. This was a charge which evidently required the control and criticism of Parliament. This money was not for any limited, definite and specified purpose; it was not to be expended in any definite limited way. It was suggested that the money should be handed over to the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary of the day. That meant that the money might be employed for a purpose which Parliament would not sanction if they had an opportunity of discussing it. The proposal to establish a Roman Catholic University was strongly resisted by many Members of that House, and it ought to be discussed before it was agreed to. But this sum might be employed for that very purpose. It was extremely dangerous to place in the hands of the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary this permanent sum, of which they would never get an account. Every argument pointed to the propriety of making this an annual charge on the Estimates. The grant to England was on the Estimates, and was subject to the control of Parliament. Why should not this sum granted to Ireland not be put on the Estimates? He saw no reason whatever. He thought the demand made by the Government that this sum should be placed on the Consolidated Fund was most unconstitutional, and the House, if it agreed with the Resolution, would one day bitterly regret it.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon) said it was not out of any disrespect to the House that he was not present yesterday when this matter was discussed. He had an important engagement upon public matters at the time, and only heard that the matter was under discussion after the debate had taken place. The hon. Gentleman opposite had said that the system of distribution which had been adopted was different from the system under which these grants had been distributed previously. No doubt he was right. The Government thought the system of division according to population was a much more convenient and simple way of dealing with this question than by the contribution system. He did not think it was possible really to defend in all its details distribution by contribution. It was impossible to follow taxation in any particular country and to say how much one part of the country contributed and how much another. The Government therefore thought that the better plan was to adopt the population basis. So far as Scotland was concerned the effect was the same, but undoubtedly Ireland was more favourably treated by the population system than by the other. But, having regard to all the circumstances of Ireland and the character of its population, he thought the House would not grudge Ireland's receiving rather more by taking the population basis than by taking the contribution basis. His hon. friend asked him what was the amount Ireland would receive and what was the amount that England would receive. He presumed his hon. friend meant "What was the extra amount that would be received?" There were certain grants which would be discontinued, and therefore they had to be added to the amount given in the new grant. The additional amount given to England would be £1,350,000, and the amount given to Ireland would be £185,000. Scotland would have £186,000 by either system of distribution. They had added to the Scottish grant £26,000. That carried out an arrangement which was assented to in 1897. He came to the conclusion after a great deal of discussion with the Scottish Office, that they had made out a good claim for granting this additional £26,000, and, therefore, he added it it to the sum based upon population.

SIR GEORGE BARTLEY: Will the grant to Scotland be put on the Consolidated Fund?

*MR. RITCHIE said it would not. The Government had a very good case for putting both the English and the Scottish grants upon the Estimates, and for having a Bill for the Irish grant. Both the English and Scottish grants were to be devoted to educational purposes.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Will Scotland not be able to spend a part of their money in floating loans?

*MR. RITCHIE said he was happy to think that Scotland did not require them. The alternatives were to put the money on the Votes, to give it as a grant-in-aid, or to do as was now proposed. If additional money was given for the purposes of education, the whole educational system in Ireland ought to be considered. It would be wasteful in the extreme if, simply because England and Scotland had this money for educational purposes, there was given to Ireland for educational purposes an equivalent sum which could not properly be devoted to those purposes until the whole educational system in Ireland had been overhauled. The Government therefore did not adopt the plan of placing the money on the Votes. To have done so would have led to extravagance. Having regard to the fact that money on the Votes has to be expended in the year, it was pretty certain that the money would have been spent in one way or another, and, in all probability, wastefully expended. Another way in which the money might have been given was as a sort of grant-in-aid.

However much his hon. friend the Member for King's Lynn might object to the plan adopted by the Government, he would certainly have objected to a grant-in-aid much more strongly, because in the case of a grant-in-aid the money need not necessarily be spent in the year in which the grant was made, and that in a matter such as was now under discussion would be a most reprehensible principle. The only other alternative was that adopted by the Government, viz, to proceed by means of a Bill. He did not wish to disguise from the House his feeling that the objections which had been taken to that method of procedure were in a large measure sound objections. It was not a good method, but it was one which under exceptional circumstances might justifiably be adopted. For instance, it had been adopted in exceptional circumstances in, he thought, 1891, when a sum of £40,000 was charged on the Consolidated Fund to assist local authorities in dealing with certain questions arising under the Land Purchase Act of 1891.

The purposes for which this money was to be granted had already been stated. First of all, there was a certain sum for the Irish Land Bill for four years. Secondly, it was to be used for whatever purposes the Irish Office might satisfy the House of Commons were legitimate and proper. The hon. Member for King's Lynn seemed to think that the Government desired to take this large sum away from the knowledge and control of Parliament. Nothing was farther from their intention. As the Chief Secretary had stated, they proposed to present to Parliament full particulars annually, before the money was spent, of the particular purposes on which the money was to be expended. A section of the Bill was as follows—

> "Before any money standing to the Irish Development grant is so applied in any year by the Lord Lieutenant, an Estimate, approved by the Treasury, showing the amount proposed to be applied, with a statement showing the purposes to which and the manner in which it is proposed to apply the money, shall be laid before the House of Commons for a period of not less than thirty days. If the House before the expiration of that period shall present an Address to His Majesty against any proposal, that proposal shall not be proceeded with, but without prejudice to the making of any new proposal."

His right hon. friend stated yesterday that the Government would consider the suggestion that the House should be enabled to express its opinion upon the proposals at a more convenient time than would be possible under the provision of the Bill. That practically amounted to a promise so to alter the clause he had just read as to bring within the purview of the House at the proper time the proposals for the expenditure of this money. That promise would be carried out, so that before the money was spent there would be full power and opportunity of discussing the purposes to which it was proposed to apply the money. The House would therefore see that the Government had no desire whatever to keep from the knowledge or control of Parliament any portion of the money allocated under this Bill. Their only object in proceeding by way of a Bill was to secure that the money should not be wasted, but applied to purposes that would best serve the interests of Ireland. Although as a general rule he did not approve of Bills for this purpose, he felt certain that the circumstances under which this money was to be given and spent for Irish purposes fully warranted the Government making the present proposal

MR. ASQUITH (Fifeshire, E.): We have been glad to hear the Chancellor of the Exchequer make an authoritative statement of the grounds which have induced the Government to adopt this method of procedure—a method which, after listening to the right hon Gentleman's speech, I will not say he justified, but one which he apologised for and admitted to be an unusual and *primâ facie* regrettable departure from well-established practice. I wish to make the position so far as we on this side are concerned perfectly clear. No one objects, as far as I know, to Ireland receiving her fair share, whatever may be the proper criterion by which you are to determine it, corresponding to the grant made to England under the Education Act of last year. There is no objection in any quarter of the House to that. But while making that admission, let me pause for a moment to point out what an extraordinary revolution characterises the action of His Majesty's present advisers in relation to this money. Equivalent grants were started a long time ago, when Mr. Goschen was Chancellor of the

Exchequer. The theory, then, was that the three parts of the United Kingdom ought for this purpose to be treated as separate entities, but the basis on which the division was made was that of their relative contributions to the Exchequer. Then followed the era of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol, who was the determined foe of the principle of equivalent grants. He denied that there was any such thing as a separable fiscal entities in the United Kingdom, and set his face steadily against any recognition of the claim, either of Ireland or of Scotland, to a substantial grant simply because an additional sum had been given to England. Now we come to the third stage in the evolution of the Government policy ; we have a new Chancellor of the Exchequer who differs from both his predecessors. He agrees with Mr. Goschen as to the principle of equivalents and treating the three countries as separate fiscal entities, but he differs from him as to the basis of the division. Throwing aside the precedents of the last twelve years he has adopted as the basis on which the division is to be made in the future, or at any rate so far as the present proposal is concerned, not relative contribution but relative population. A more confused and illogical condition of things it is hardly possible to imagine. The House ought to take the opportunity afforded by this Bill of really threshing out the principle on which these equivalent grants ought to be distributed between the three countries. As a Scottish Member I am interested in the point of view of Scotland, and I am glad to hear that by some strange arithmetical process we shall receive exactly the same sum whether our share is ascertained on the basis of contribution or on that of population.

MR. RITCHIE was understood to take exception to the word "strange."

MR. ASQUITH: Then I will substitute "happy" for "strange," because we are not damnified by the result. I am not complaining in the least because the effect of the application of the new principle is to increase the grant to Ireland, but I do say that we ought to have some definite and established principle by which the dealings between the three countries should be regulated. I started by saying that nobody objects to Ireland getting her equivalent grant. I will make a second statement which I think will command equally universal acceptance, viz., that no one considers it necessary that the sum so granted to Ireland should be appropriated to identically the same purposes as the money given to England or Scotland. It would be a most pedantic and ridiculous thing, the social conditions and economic circumstances of the countries being so different, to say that because we happened to find that the best channel for this expenditure in England or Scotland was in the improvement of our educational system therefore Ireland must devote her share to exactly the same purpose.

I now come to the third point, and here we do take a different view. Why is this method, admitted by the right hon. Gentleman to be objectionable, and for which I venture to say it is impossible to cite a precedent, being adopted? The right hon. Gentleman did attempt to justify it by what happened, I think in the year 1891, in the Land Bill of that year. You could not have a better illustration of the difference between the old Parliamentary practice and the one it is now sought to set up. There you had a definite sum charged on the Consolidated Fund. You had a definite sum allocated in the Land Bill for specific purposes described in the Bill itself. That is in strict accordance with what is reasonable and usual in such cases. But that is not what is taking place here. Here you are dealing with a sum which you will make a permanent charge on the Consolidated Fund, but you leave the purposes to which it is to be applied, and the amount of it to be specifically applied as between those purposes, vague and indefinite, and subject to future change. Surely the right course to take, the course which is in accordance with sound principle and with Parliamentary precedent, was not to have this Bill at all, but to include the matter in the Land Bill, where it properly belongs, because but for the Land Bill this proposal would not have been made, or it would not have been made in anything like its present shape. It ought to have been inserted in the Land Bill, and there the Government ought to have had the purposes to which the money is to be applied specifically earmarked and sanctioned by Parliament. I renew the protest which we made at a previous stage, and which we shall continue to make at subsequent stages, against a method of procedure which is totally unsupported by precedent.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): The main point of the argument of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Fife is that the purposes for which this money will be used should be specifically earmarked, and he suggests that this provision could have been put into the Land Bill. The right hon. Gentleman goes further and says that but for the fact that we are producing a Land Bill no such grant would have been proposed.

MR. ASQUITH: I did not say that.

MR. WYNDHAM: But the claim of Ireland to a set-off against the large aid given last year would remain quite independently of the Land Bill. The ultimate uses to which this grant will be put are, as I explained yesterday, to give the Treasury an indemnity, and to give Ireland a promise that its claim against education will be met. The right hon. Gentleman seems to think that this money ought to be devoted in Ireland to precisely the same object as in England. Ireland is not ready to receive this money for education. Is it to be wasted on immature plans, or is Ireland to lose it until the time for helping education arrives? We hold that it would be an injustice if Ireland is obliged so to wait until she is ready to receive public money for this purpose. One of the reasons which actuate the Government in taking this course is that it has occurred in the services of local government in England, and some of them are important services, and those services have received aid from the common Exchequer a number of years in advance of such aid being given for similar purposes in Ireland. I will not elaborate that argument, because we hold that by setting off one thing against another, no doubt substantial justice has been done. If you balance projects in one country against projects in another country, it will be found that substantial justice has been done. But last year nearly £1,500,000 went to England alone. Ireland, therefore, has a corresponding claim, and the question arises how it is to be used. Are definite objects to be specified in the Bill? Are we to anticipate what public works might be of use? In my opinion there is no alternative between forcing Ireland to waste or to lose this money, or else stating in a Bill that the money belongs to Ireland, and that it should be allocated to such projects as will be of service to that country. I will not now go into the question of parliamentary control. This grant is in a Bill now, and, as I stated yesterday, we intend to insert an Amendment in the Bill which will enable the House to discuss the whole of the matter at a more convenient time than after twelve o'clock. I do not know that there is anything else that calls for a reply. As to giving these grants in the proportion of eighty to England, eleven to Scotland, and nine to Ireland, it was no doubt a reasonable plan at the time of its adoption, after a long period of peace, when there were no sudden expansions in our national expenditure; but those figures would not stand now owing to war charges, and the proportionate amount contributed by Ireland is now less than nine. If you had passed your Education Bill before the war Ireland would have got nine against eight, and in the middle of the war six against nine. Could anything be more illogical than that? The basis of population compares favourably, I think, with the basis which has been suggested as an alternative.

SIR GEORGE BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said that nobody objected to Ireland having the equivalent grant, but all that the right hon. Gentleman had just stated certainly bore out the idea that those items should be put in the ordinary way on the Estimates of the year. They were going to vote £185,000 a year without any specification as to how it was to be allocated, and it appeared from what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had read that in any year all the Government had got to do was to frame a scheme for anything they liked—it might be for a Catholic University—they simply placed it on the Table of this House, and then they might carry it without any discussion beyond the ordinary discussion upon a claim of that sort. That was quite unconstitutional, inasmuch as the grant to England and Scotland would be put on the Estimates and debated every year. If it varied every year in Ireland there was no reason why it should not be discussed in the ordinary way, and it was upsetting the whole principle of finance that they should vote a large sum like this to the Government to use in any way they like. They were doing extraordinary things now in finance, and he was quite sure that the late Chancellor of the Exchequer would not have been a party to such a scheme as this. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer was particularly strong upon all the constitutional usages of finance, and it seemed a most extraordinary thing that they should go out of their way to form a precedent which struck at the whole responsibility of this House in finance. The principle had always been that the item should be put upon the Estimates and discussed every year. Every item, and particularly items such as this, ought to be discussed and put upon the Estimates and voted in the ordinary way. He could not understand this principle, for by this proposal they were upsetting every rule which they had boasted of in the past as the bulwark of their financial system. He protested entirely against this sum being put on the Consolidated Fund, and against this being made a new precedent, which he thought was a most dangerous one, for it was handing over a large sum of money to the Government of the day, to do what they liked with, without, apparently, any responsibility.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 193; Noes, 54. (Division List, No. 53.)

AYES.

Abraham, W. (*Cork, N.E.*)
Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Arrol, Sir William
Atkinson, Right Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. HonSirH
Austin, Sir John
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Man'r*
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (*Leeds*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Beckett, Ernest William
Bhownaggree, Sir M. M.
Bignold, Arthur
Bigwood, James
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bousfield, William Robert
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Bull, William James
Butcher, John George
Caldwell, James
Campbell, J. H. M (Dublin Univ.
Cavendish, V C W (*Derbysh.*)
Cecil, Evelyn (*Aston Manor*)
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Chamberlain, Rt Hon J (*Birm*
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Chamberlayne, T. (*Southmptn*
Chapman, Edward
Charrington, Spencer
Clare, Octavius Leigh
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
Colomb, Sir John Chas. Ready
Colston, Chas. Edw H. Athole
Cook, Sir Frederick Lucas
Corbett, A. Cameron (*Glasg.*)
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Cox, Irwin Edwd. Bainbridge
Craig, Charles Curtis (*Antrim, S*
Cranborne, Viscount
Cripps, Charles Alfred
Cross, H. Shepherd (*Bolton*)
Crossley, Sir Savile
Dalkeith, Earl of
Davenport, William Bromley-
Denny, Colonel
Devlin, Chas. Ramsay (*Galway.*
Dewar, Sir T. R. (*Tr. Haml'ts*
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dimsdale, Rt. Hon. Sir Jos. C.
Doogan, P. C.
Dorington, Rt. Hon. Sir J. E.
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir Wm. Theodore
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Faber, George Denison (*York*)
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Ed.
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
FitzGerald, Sir Robt. Penrose-
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S.W.*
Fyler, George Arthur
Garfit, William
Gilhooly, James
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (*Elgin & Nrn*
Gordon, Maj Evans (*Tr. Hmlts*
Gore, Hn. S. F. Ormsby- (*Lin*
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Greene, Hy. D. (*Shrewsbury*)
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Hain, Edward
Hambro, Charles Eric
Hamilton, Marq. of (*Londondy*
Hanbury, Rt. Hn. Robt. Wm.
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Hatch, Ernest Frederick G.
Heath, James (*Staffs., N.W.*)
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Hoult, Joseph
Jeffreys, Rt. Hn. Arthur Fred
Joyce, Michael
Kemp, Lieut.-Colonel George
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*
Keswick, William
Knowles, Lees
Labouchere, Henry
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*)
Lawrence, Sir Jos. (*Monm'th*)
Lawrence, Wm. F. (*Liverpool*
Lawson, John Grant
Lee, A. H. (*Hants, Fareham*)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Fredk. N. S.
Long, Col. Chas. W. (*Evesham*
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (*Bristol, S*
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Francis William
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*
Lucas, Reg'ld J. (*Portsmouth*)

Sir George Bartley.

Lundon, W.
Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred
Macdona, John Cumming
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
M'Govern, T.
M'Iver, Sir Lewis (*Edinburgh W*
M'Killop, Jas. (*Stirlingshire*)
Majendie, James A. H.
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Maxwell, W. J H (*Dumfriesshir*
Middlemore, Jn. Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Mitchell, William (*Burnley*)
Montagu, G. (*Huntingdon*)
Morrell, George Herbert
Morrison, James Archibald
Mount, William Arthur
Murray, Rt. Hn A Graham (*Bute*
Newdegate, Francis A. N.
Nicholson, William Graham
Nicol, Donald Ninian
O'Brien, K. (*Tipperary, Mid*)
O'Brien, Patrick (*Kilkenny*)
O'Mara, James
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Pease, H. Pike (*Darlington*)
Pierpoint, Robert
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Purvis, Robert
Randles, John S.
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Rattigan, Sir William Henry
Remnant, Jas. Farquharson
Renshaw, Sir Charles Bine
Renwick, George
Ridley, Hon. M. W (*Stalybridge*
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Round, Rt. Hon. James
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, W. W. (*Liverpool*)
Seely, Chas. Hilton (*Lincoln*)
Seely, Maj. J E. B (*Isle of Wight*)
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Sinclair, Louis (*Romford*)
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, H C (*North'mb. Tyneside*
Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (*Strand*)
Stanley, Edw. Jas. (*Somerset*)
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stewart, Sir Mark J. M'Taggart
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Jn. M.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier
Taylor, Austin (*East Toxteth*)
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. William Hall
Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir W. H.
Wanklyn, James Leslie
Wason, J. Cathcart (*Orkney*)
Welby, Lt.-Col. A. C E (*Taunton*
Whiteley, H. (*Ashton-u.-Lyne*)
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Willox, Sir John Archibald
Wilson-Todd, W. H. (*Yorks.*)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (*Bath*)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

Tellers for the Ayes—
Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther

NOES.

Allen, Chas. P. (*Glos., Stroud*)
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Bell, Richard
Bolton, Thomas Dolling
Bond, Edward
Brigg, John
Cawley, Frederick
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*
Cremer, William Randal
Crooks, William
Davies, Alfred (*Carmarthen*)
Dewar, John A. (*Inverness-sh.*)
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Disraeli, Coningsby Ralph
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Duncan, J. Hastings
Dunn, Sir William
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-
Helme, Norval Watson
Hutchinson, Dr. Charles Fredk.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Lambert, George
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Newnes, Sir George
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Palmer, Sir C. M. (*Durham*)
Perks, Robert William
Reid, Sir R. Threshie (*Dumfries*
Roberts, John H. (*Denbighs.*)
Runciman, Walter
Sandys, Lt.-Col. Thos. Myles
Schwann, Charles E
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles E. (*Stafford*)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Strachey, Sir Edward
Taylor, Theo. C. (*Radcliffe*)
Thomas, David A. (*Merthyr*)
Thomas, F. Freeman-(*Hastings*
Thomas, J. A. (*Glam., Gower*)
Thomson, F. W. (*York, W. R.*)
Toulmin, George
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Walton, John Lawson (*Leeds, S.*
Weir, James Galloway
White, Luke (*York, E.R.*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer

Tellers for the Noes—
Mr. Gibson Bowles and Sir Brampton Gurdon.

Bill ordered to be brought in upon the said Resolution by Mr. Wyndham, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland.

IRELAND DEVELOPMENT GRANT BILL.

"To provide for a Special Grant to be used for the purposes of the Development of Ireland," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 22nd April, and to be printed. [Bill 133.]

EVENING SITTING.

THAMES RIVER STEAMBOAT SERVICE BILL. [By Order.]

[Second Reading.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

*Sir JOSEPH DIMSDALE (City of London) said that while raising no objection to the Bill in its entirety, he would ask for an undertaking from the promoters that any dredging done in the neighbourhood of the bridges under the administration of the Corporation should be carried on under the superintendence and control of the Corporation officials. He thought there was nothing unreasonable in the request, and if an undertaking were given to that effect he should be satisfied. He had no desire to say anything against the Bill.

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) said that on behalf of the promoters he was pleased to give the pledge required by the hon. Baronet.

MR. BULL (Hammersmith) said the problem of the river communication of London differed very greatly from that of other cities. Those who compared it with the Seine and the Mersey must remember that the Seine flowed through the centre of the city of Paris, that there was very little tide there, and the difficulties we had to combat in the Thames were altogether avoided. With regard to the Mersey, it was merely a ferry, and not a river steamboat service at all. From 1860 or 1870 up to 1876 there was a steamboat service which paid very well, because at that time the fare from Hammersmith to the Bank was sixpence. All that had been altered by the railways, improved bus services, and tubes. In the 'eighties and early 'nineties the river traffic got into other hands and was ruined, not because of the river traffic itself but because the company engaged in pleasure traffic to ports around the coast. He suggested that in order to make it pay the service should be a regular one and carried on during all weathers. It should start in the early morning and be continued until late at night; that the piers which were now absolutely inadequate and placed in the wrong places should be thoroughly overhauled and placed in positions where they were accessible to the public; and that the steamers should be of light draught, with large cabin accommodation, so that the people could be properly housed in wet weather. He would suggest two services, one stopping at all piers up and down he river, and another, an express service, stopping say once at Chelsea on the trip between London Bridge and Hammersmith. He thought the sum mentioned by the County Council Bill, £380,000, was barely sufficient for the purpose of such a service as this, because if the thing was done at all it must be done upon a basis which would make it certain that in the course of twelve or eighteen months it would pay; and unless careful thought was given to the financial part, and that was put upon a proper basis, it seemed to him that the London County Council would court failure.

SIR FREDERICK BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said the object of this Bill was to establish a steamboat service on the River Thames. It had been tried several times by private enterprise, and had always resulted in a pecuniary loss, and it could hardly be doubted that in this case there would be a very serious loss, which the ratepayers would have to make good, but at the same time it might be well for the Bill to go to a Committee, as that Committee would be able to sift the evidence and come to a conclusion as to the amount of loss the ratepayers would suffer. It would be fair to allow this Bill to be sent to a Committee on condition that the next Bill (the Thames Steamboat Trust Bill) were also allowed to go to the Committee.

MR. BRIGG (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley), having taken part in the discussion of a similar Bill some years ago, when that Bill was rejected, expressed the opinion that the conditions under which the subject was approached now were somewhat altered. It seemed to him that an opportunity ought to be given to the London County Council to establish a steamboat service, and therefore he supported the Second Reading.

MR. JOHN BURNS said the hon. Member for Hammersmith had expressed some doubt as to whether a proper river steamboat service could be established under the conditions of this Bill; that £380,000 was hardly sufficient for the purpose. What the hon. Gentleman the Member for Hammersmith regarded as a defect was a virtue; because the money was sufficient for a commencement, and if the hon. Gentleman's hopes were realised, it would be an easy matter, when experience justified it, for the Council to ask that the service should be put into the condition that the ambitious scheme of the hon. Gentleman evidently demanded. Everything the hon. Gentleman said with regard to piers was in favour of the Bill; and as to regular and continuous service, better piers, and piers in the proper places, he agreed with the hon. Gentleman, and was pleased to have his support. Although the hon. Gentleman did not always see eye to eye with him on the County Council, yet, as the late Chairman of the Bridges Committee, he knew the capacity of the river and how badly it was served. He would ask the hon. Gentleman at this stage to reserve criticisms on detail, and support the principles of the Bill.

He appreciated the conciliatory attitude of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Peckham, though he did not suggest that it was an indication of repentance for his attitude towards the County Council the other night. The hon. Gentleman thought that the service would not be what its promoters anticipated. As regarded that, he would only say that for years it was obvious to every one, especially Members of the House, who had a unique opportunity of seeing the Thames, that the steamboat service was a disgrace to London, considering the character of the river. It was inadequate, slow, irregular, and too seasonal. That was due to many reasons. One was lack of capital, another lack of enterprise, and a third, lack of capacity. It was provided with bad piers, piers in the wrong places, and no piers at all in the proper places. The management had worsened, and it was safe to say that the service was the worst on what was the finest river in the world. The management had shown no regard as to relations with railways, omnibuses, trams, and bridges; and the regular passengers had been sacrificed to the pleasure traffic.

Private enterprise under successive managements had signally failed to meet the river requirements of London; and he said, respectfully, that in the interests of the river, and in the interests of the health, leisure, and pleasure of the people of this vast city, private enterprise having failed, public enterprise should step in. The London County Council now asked permission to substitute that public enterprise. They made that demand under favourable circumstances. The Thames Conservancy practically supported the Bill; and the City Corporation gave it at least a qualified support. The Bill started under favourable auspices. The County Council, being the bridges, embankments, and highways authority for London, believed that they could supply a steamboat service better than any private enterprise, even with more capital, could offer. They would be able to bring a pier to every bridge, and a tram to every pier; and, by interchangeable tickets, a profit could almost be guaranteed; and even if there were a loss in the first two or three years, it would be insignificant.

In order to carry that out, the Council asked the House of Commons to pass this Bill, to enable the Council to purchase a fleet of new, clean, swift, and modern vessels, which London ought to have. Acting in conjunction with the Thames Conservancy and the City Corporation, the County Council would provide more piers, and better piers, would link the piers with the trams, would provide more favourable approaches, and a service which, he was convinced, would pay. The comparison with Paris was not altogether fair. There was no comparison between the Seine and the Thames. The Seine was not a tidal river; but the Thames had two tides up, and two tides down every twenty-four hours. No other river enjoyed that advantage, and he believed that the tides would lend themselves to a good steamboat service, which, judging from other cities which had instituted similar services, could be made to pay. The County Council was also the ferry authority for London, and had three ferries at Woolwich which were admirably managed. They carried 5,000,000 passengers and 500,000 vehicles every year free; and, incidentally, was allowed by Parliament to lose £20,000 a year of the ratepayers' money. Surely the House of Commons, consistently and logically, private enterprise having failed, should allow the Council, after the experience it had acquired at Woolwich, to carry people up and down the river as well as across the river. There were many other reasons why London should have a steamboat service such as the Bill sought to provide, and he asked the House of Commons, respectfully, but with great hope, to allow the Bill to pass its Second Reading and to be sent upstairs to a Committee. The result would be that London would get an efficient, cheap, and regular steamboat service, which it had long lacked, and which it was the object of the Bill to provide.

MR. CUMMING MACDONA (Southwark Rotherhithe) said the proposal of the County Council was to provide a grand new service which would be magnificently arranged in every way. That was a most desirable object if it could possibly be attained. The grievance which he wished to press upon the House was that the Trust Society appeared to have forgotten the magnificent services rendered to London and the country by the watermen and lightermen. The County Council, on the other hand, had offered to avail themselves of the excellent services of these men to the best of their ability. Anyone familiar with the history of the country could not forget 1293, when the watermen of London carried the Members for the City of London and their friends from London Bridge to Greenwich for a halfpenny, nor the time when the country called upon them to fight, and when they took part in every great naval engagement. When the Members of the House of Commons were tyrannically turned out of their Chamber it was the watermen of London who brought them back again, and the Speaker gave them thanks.

SIR FORTESCUE FLANNERY (Yorkshire, Shipley) said the hon. Member for Battersea was challenged by the hon. Member for Peckham to state whether he would agree to the Second Reading of the Bill which was to follow, if the Bill before the House were read a second time. Although the hon. Member could not discuss the details of the next Bill he could quite properly have answered that challenge, but he had carefully avoided any reference to it whatever. In regard to the provision of a passenger service on the River Thames there were two proposals before the public. One was embodied in the Bill promoted by the County Council and now before the House. The Bill proposed to take possession of, or at all events to supplant, the existing piers and landing places. The private enterprise which had hitherto existed in this matter had involved a large investment of capital, and no less than five of the piers or landing places belonged to those concerned in that private enterprise. The London County Council sought by this Bill, and by their opposition to the Bill which was to follow, to transmit to the Committee upstairs solely the question that they should have the opportunity of supplying the wants of the public in regard to a steamboat service on the river. He asked for a pledge from the promoters of the Bill that the County Council would give fair play to those who had hitherto supplied the service, and that the next Bill on the Order Paper should also be sent to the Committee.

MR. COHEN (Islington, E.) joined in the appeal made by the hon. Member for the Shipley Division that a pledge should be given by the hon. Member for Battersea. He himself felt confident of the superiority of the service which would be provided by the County Council, but still he thought both Bills should go upstairs, where the Committee would give them far more consideration than the House could possibly give.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I am prepared at the proper time to accede to the request made.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

THAMES STEAMBOAT TRUST BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

*SIR JOSEPH DIMSDALE said he felt that the hon. Member for Battersea was placed in a difficult position when he was asked to give a pledge in regard to this Bill. The hon. Member was an individual member of the County Council, and whether he acceded to the Second Reading of the Bill or not, he himself could not allow the Second Reading to pass without a severe protest. He did not rise to discuss the question whether a steamboat service was required for the Thames, but he did rise to ask the House to pause before it sanctioned a measure creating a trust, promoted practically by a company more or less unfortunate in its business undertakings. In it, power was asked that the Corporation, the County Council, and the Conservators of the Thames should be authorised to guarantee the interest on the money. But neither the Corporation nor the County Council had been consulted on this proposed trust, and were ignorant of the arrangement. It was also provided that the Corporation might guarantee interest at 3 per cent. on any sum not exceeding £100,000 to be borrowed or raised; and for acquiescence in this arrangement the Corporation were to have the luxury of putting three trustees on the body. But the most serious suggestion was that the London County Council should be authorised and required to pay money to the trustees out of the county fund, and in the case of the Corporation out of the funds of the Bridge House Estate. Now the Bridge House Estate was a trust carried on under Acts of Parliament, and the City Corporation, even if they so desired, could not hypothecate its funds to be used in the way proposed without the sanction of Parliament.

SIR FORTESCUE FLANNERY: Is the hon. Baronet aware that his fellow Member for the City is one of the backers of the Bill?

*SIR JOSEPH DIMSDALE: I am fully aware of it, but that does not prevent me from doing what I think right. On behalf of the Corporation he protested strongly against their name being brought into this trust Bill. For such a Bill to go upstairs would be simply wasting the time of the Committee.

SIR FORTESCUE FLANNERY said he had never listened to a speech in this House with more astonishment than he had done to that of his right hon. friend. This Bill was introduced by the senior Member for the City of London, and his right hon. friend actually asked the House to withhold it from the consideration of the judicial body upstairs. It was difficult for him to accept the idea that the right hon. Baronet, who was the keeper of the City's cash, was able to pledge the Corporation of the City of London to a particular course in antagonism to the Bill that was introduced by his colleague. In those circumstances he suggested that the proper course for the House was to leave this question to be determined by its own Committee upstairs. He had the fullest confidence that the House with a sense of fairness would allow the Bill to be dealt with by the judicial body appointed for the purpose.

MR. JOHN BURNS said it was significant that the hon. Member for the City of London, whose name was on the back of the Bill, did not happen to be there to defend it. He did not object to the Bill going to the Committee upstairs because he was convinced that the proposal embodied in it was so unreasonable, impracticable, and he had almost said impudent, that no House of Commons would for a moment think of passing it. Three public bodies, the Thames Conservancy, the City Corporation, and the County Council, all refusing, were to embark £100,000 each of the ratepayers' money to buy up a fleet at a price, according to competent authority, about four times what the total fleet was worth. This was the kind of Bill which the House ought to reject; but the London County Council being, as always, magnanimous, were prepared, if he was allowed to keep his pledge, to let the Bill go upstairs and receive the happy despatch at the hands of a Parliamentary Committee. He appealed to the hon. Baronet to rest content with that.

*SIR JOSEPH DIMSDALE said that having made his protest he would not attempt to divide the House.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[MR. JEFFREYS (Hampshire, N.) in the Chair.]

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3—

*COLONEL WELBY (Taunton) moved—

"In Clause 3, page 3, line 5, after first 'the,' to insert 'good and sufficient.'"

He said that his object in moving the insertion of these words was that it might be thoroughly known and understood by all those who had to discharge duties in connection with billeting that they could demand good and sufficient accommodation. Whilst in Infantry he was only once billeted himself, and, there being only a small party, they were very well accommodated. Cavalry regiments, were, however, constantly moved throughout the country; and the process of billeting was to send on ahead a billeting party, which went to the constable of the town where the troops were to rest for the night. The constable took the billeting party around the town and billets were allotted for both horses and men. Particularly in the North of England the billets were often very wide-lying, so that it was late before the officers could visit each, and by that time the men had settled down in their billets, had their hot meal, and did not care to complain. He had known many cases where the men had to pay money out of their own pockets in order to procure better accommodation for themselves, and of instances where the men preferred to sleep with their horses in the outhouses rather than occupy the sleeping places provided for them. He also knew of two and three men sleeping in the same bed. In Irish towns the billets were simply filthy. He thought that if the Government paid money for these billets they ought to be good, although the amount was not too large. He had no intention of being unfair to the innkeepers, but as they were to have a better class of soldiers, these ought to be provided with better accommodation.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 3, line 5, after the first word 'the' to insert 'good and sufficient.'"

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford) said that he could see no reason whatever for the Amendment proposed by the hon. and gallant Gentleman. Under Section 106 of the Act the innkeepers were bound under penalties to provide "good and sufficient accommodation," and the War Office had received no complaints of failure in that duty in any respect.

*COLONEL WELBY said that Section 106 was unknown to the officers generally. It stated that when an innkeeper was unable himself to billet the men and horses allotted to him, he must provide "good and sufficient accommodation" elsewhere, but this was not stated with regard to the accommodation the innkeeper himself furnished, and therefore was not generally known.

MR. BRODRICK said that every officer was bound to know the provisions of the Army Act.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 3 agreed to.

New Clause (Amendment of 44 and 45 Vic., c. 58., s. 4.)—*(Colonel Welby.)*

Brought up, and read the first time.

*COLONEL WELBY said he wished to move an Amendment to Clause 4, to omit the word "shamefully" as applied to the conduct of an officer who abandoned or surrendered a garrison or post, and to insert the words, "without due cause." The Committee would understand how difficult it was for the military authorities to order a court-martial on an officer who had abandoned or surrendered a post or garrison if they had to assume that it was done shamefully. It also made it difficult for the officer himself to ask for a court-martial under that section, because that might be regarded as more or less an acknowledgment that there was some shamefulness in his action. In fact, the section raised a presumption as to the character of the action. There had been too often surrenders in South Africa which might have been shameful or otherwise; this word "shamefully" had stood in the way, and prevented courts-martial from being held. He did not know what was the exact wording of the naval regulations with regard to the loss of his ship by a naval officer, but he could not believe that a naval officer, who was tried for losing his ship through stress of weather, or some other emergency, was tried for "shamefully" losing his ship. It had been pointed out to him that merely to omit the word "shamefully" might render an officer who had retired from a post or position for strategic reasons liable to trial;

that difficulty would be got over by inserting the words "without due cause," instead of the word "shamefully."

MR. BRODRICK said he quite understood the object of his hon. and gallant friend in moving his Amendment, but it raised a very much larger question than the hon. and gallant Gentleman intended. He did not anticipate that the change of "shamefully" to "without due cause" would have any material effect on the numbers of officers who might be brought before a Court-martial. There was a great difference between those who held the view of his hon. and gallant friend, and those who administered the Army at this moment, in regard to what should be the subject of a Court-martial. The sentiment of the Army was entirely different from that of the Navy. The sentiment in the Army was that so long as there was any reasonable doubt on the matter in question an officer should not be deprived of his sword and tried by Court-martial; his conduct should be the subject of inquiry which fell short of a decision on the part of the authorities that something had occurred that made it necessary to bring him to justice. That was the opinion of the late and of the present Commander-in-Chief, and of Lord Kitchener. There was the less necessity for the change since the system of sworn Courts of Inquiry had been established, which took the place of Courts-martial, unless the evidence appeared such as to make it incumbent upon the authorities to try the case. He suggested that the Amendment should not be pressed, for he could not possibly accept it, and he did not believe that even if the Amendment were carried many more officers would be tried by Court-martial than now. He did not think that anything had happened in the late war which would justify the Committee in arriving at that conclusion.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) said that having been shown a good many of the reports of the inquiries held during the late war, he sympathised very much with what his hon. and gallant friend opposite had said. It was pretty clear from the speech made by the Secretary of State for War that if the right hon. Gentleman was left to himself upon this matter he would probably take the same view. He did not think that after all their experience in South Africa they ought to be guided by the sentiments of their older officers, whose experience was in the past, for they themselves had been trained in the light of what had more recently happened. But the Secretary of State now seemed to think that what happened in South Africa ought not to force the matter on the attention of the Committee. His view was entirely opposed to that. He thought circumstances had happened in South Africa which should induce that House to reconsider this question. In all the cases which had been brought before the House he had supported the War Office.

What was the system which had been pursued in all the many cases of unfortunate surrender which had taken place? In most of them there had been two inquiries, one an informal inquiry and then a formal one. The second inquiry, however, always tended to be a mere confirmation of the proceedings of the first inquiry. In many cases what had happened was that the conduct of the officers who had surrendered had been the subject of a preliminary and informal inquiry while they were prisoners immediately after the event, and when they had been recovered from captivity, sometimes weeks and months afterwards, then the statutory Court of Inquiry had been held, at which they were present and gave evidence. In those cases the proceedings of the first court were placed before the second Court of Inquiry. From the lawyers' point of view the first court was no court at all, for it was a mere informal inquiry for the purpose of informing the General-in-Command of the facts, so that he might take any disciplinary action upon his own authority. As a rule the second court, in the most perfunctory fashion, merely confirmed the finding of the first court. That had almost everywhere been the case, and he was not aware of a single case where the statutory court had reversed the proceedings of the first court. In all these cases, the officers concerned were almost always dissatisfied, and complained that they had not had a trial by Court-martial. Surely it would be better that they should encourage the holding of

Courts-martial. He thought the word "shamefully" discouraged the holding of Courts-martial, both from the point of view of the officer and from that of the authorities of the Army. He thought it would be better to get rid of this word, and introduce such words as his hon. and gallant friend had referred to, because they would increase the number of Courts-martial, thus removing the sense of injustice felt by the accused officers. He could not see that a case had been made out by the Secretary of State for War against the Amendment, which he thought was worthy of the consideration of the House.

*COLONEL WELBY said he agreed that Courts-martial in the Army and courts-martial in the Navy were regarded from a totally different standpoint; but whether that was for the good of the service he was not so certain. They judged a tree by its fruit. The fruit in regard to the Army tree was these terrible appeals to the House, while the fruit in regard to the Naval tree was that they were never referred to in this House. Although it was true that the Army had gone on for 200 or 250 years in this groove, he very much doubted whether the right hon. Gentleman, in supporting the opinions of his military advisers, was really doing what was best for the Army. He thought the time had now arrived when the right hon. Gentleman should reconsider this question. If they were to remove the word "shamefully" from the latter part of the section, it seemed to him that anybody called into a Council of War with regard to a surrender would be liable to be charged by court-martial, as the Council of War was simply an advisory council, the responsibility must rest with the commanding officer. He was sorry that he could not listen to the appeal of the right hon. Gentleman, and he must press the Amendment which he had put before the House.

Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

MR. LAWSON WALTON (Leeds, S.) said "shamefully" was an extraordinary word to appear in connection with the definition of a crime. It left in the hands of the military authorities absolute discretion in deciding whether or not a Court-martial should be appointed to investigate an offence. If they chose not to attach to the offence the qualification "shameful" they might deal with it without a Court-martial; but if they chose to attach to it the description of "shameful" they must appoint a Court-martial. The conduct in either case might be the same. It might be an act of negligence, abandoning some position which it was the duty of the officer concerned to defend. Therefore, the conduct with regard to which the officer was censured or dismissed, or punished, might be beyond question. The military authorities might therefore come to the conclusion that they would not have a Court-martial, because they might not choose to describe the offence as "shameful," and they might deal with it as a breach of military duty and punish it as though it were shameful, and exercise all the power given by this section, which involved all the punishments and the disgrace of the officer concerned without giving him the right of a Court-martial. Such a position was most illogical, and operated most unfairly with regard to the officers concerned.

A military offence, for which the punishment attached ranged from a small sentence to a death sentence, ought to be clearly defined. It ought to be defined by some language which was not the subject of controversy. There was an admirable precedent in the same section of the Navy Act. The expression "shamefully" did not appear in the Navy Act. The words were "Guilty of negligent or designed conduct which involves the loss of his ship." The question of whether an officer had been negligent or not ought to be the subject of a trial, and the officer charged with that offence ought to have the same claim to a Court-martial as he would have if his conduct were "shameful." Let them assume a case in which the charge was negligence. Who was to decide whether it was shameful or not? It might be shameful or negligence of a slight character. The Commander-in-Chief had to say whether he thought this question of negligence should or should not be investigated by a Court-martial. This was all-important to the officer, because he might dispute the allegation of negligence, and yet he was to be deprived of the right of having that dispute determined, because, in the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief, a Court-martial was not necessary. If the hon. and gallant Gentleman would substitute for the words "without just cause" the words "negligently or designedly," or even the word "negligently," he would put the Army Act into consonance with the Navy Act, and at once introduce similar principles in their application to discipline in both branches of the service. If he would consent to this suggestion he would support the hon. and gallant Member.

MR. BRODRICK: As my hon. and gallant friend intends to press his Amendment to a division, I appeal to the Committee not to come to a sudden resolution to change a word which has stood in this Act for so many years. They could not change one word without going into every section of this part of the Act, and considering whether they were going to change the whole spirit on which the Act had been administered. At this moment no man was brought before a Court-martial unless there was a presumption in the minds of those who sent him there that something very much amiss had occurred. If they were going to change that presumption, then they must change it in the other sections, or there would be serious danger of injustice being done. From what I have seen of such cases, I can only say that the presumption is very strong in the minds of the officers who sit in the Court. Unless there is a very strong balance for believing that an officer is guilty, I think you would be very unwise to change one word of the Act and one section, unless the same spirit is to pervade all the charges in this section. For these reasons I ask the Committee not to make so sudden a change after a very brief debate, for it is a change which is not borne out by the wishes of those who are responsible for the discipline of the Army.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth) said he felt great hesitation in consenting to the alteration of a word which had been in the Army Act for so long a time. He saw no argument at all in the comparison between the Navy and the Army Acts in this matter, in so far as it was urged that the difference between the two resulted in appeals to that House. The appeals to the House in these matters sprang from quite another cause. Let them abolish all military subordinate courts if they liked, but let them maintain that an officer had responsibility. The only way he ought to be cleared was by a Court-martial.

MAJOR SEELY (Isle of Wight) appealed to his hon. and gallant friend not to press the matter to a division, because, although he entirely agreed with him, it seemed to him that so painful a subject was hardly meet for a division in that House. He spoke under correction, but he believed that during the South African War Lord Kitchener issued an order that all these painful incidents, irrespective of whether they were "shameful" or not, should be the subject of a Court-martial. If this were so, it was an argument in support of his hon. and gallant friend, and perhaps the Secretary of State would consider the matter in view of his statement.

SIR CHARLES DILKE asked how many Courts-martial had been held. He believed that hardly any had been, as a matter of fact. He submitted that the word "negligently" was less applicable to Army matters than to the loss of a ship.

SIR J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.) said the hon. and learned Member who had spoken on the other side of the House quite forgot apparently that there might be gradations of blame attaching to individuals, and that the surrender of posts might be due to other causes than cowardice, as, for instance, want of judgment. He wished most particularly, however, to point out the great danger the House was running in interfering in matters of discipline with the opinions of high authorities in the Army, with their imperfect knowledge and the absence of responsibility; they would run great risk of abusing their privileges if they decided in opposition to the deliberately formed opinion of the military authorities.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 49; | Noes, 143. (Division List, No. 54).

AYES.

Allen, Chas. P. (*Glos., Stroud*)
Asquith, Rt. Hon. Herbt. Hy.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Bell, Richard
Bolton, Thomas Dolling
Brigg, John
Caldwell, James
Cawley, Frederick
Cecil, Lord Hugh (*Greenwich*)
Davenport, William Bromley
Davies, Alfred (*Carmarthen*)
Dewar, John A. (*Inverness-sh.*)
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Duncan, J. Hastings
Evans, Sir F. H. (*Maidstone*)
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (*Leith*
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-
Helme, Norval Watson
Hutchinson, Dr. Chas. Fredk.
Jones, Wm. (*Carnarvonshire*)
Kearley, Hudson E.
Leigh, Sir Joseph
Leng, Sir John
Morgan, J. Lloyd (*Carmarthen*
Pirie, Duncan V.
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, John Bryn (*Eifion*)
Runciman, Walter
Schwann, Charles E.
Shackleton, David James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Spencer, Rt. Hn C. R. (*North'nts*
Strachey, Sir Edward
Taylor, Theodore C. (*Radcliffe*
Thomas, David A. (*Merthyr*)
Thomas, J. A. (*Glam., Gower*)
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Walton, J. Lawson (*Leeds, S.*)
Wason, J. Cathcart (*Orkney*)
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Whiteley, G. (*York, W. R.*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Woodhouse, Sir J T (*Huddr'sf'd*

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Colonel Welby and Sir Charles Dilke.

NOES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Austin, Sir John
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Man'r*
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (*Leeds*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bignold, Arthur
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith
Bousfield, William Robert
Bowles, Lt-Col. H F. (*Middlesex*
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Bull, William James
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Cavendish, V C W (*Derbysh.*)
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Charrington, Spencer
Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Colomb, Sir John Chas. Ready
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Corbett, A. Cameron (*Glasg.*)
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Cox, Irwin Edward Bainbridge
Craig, Chas. Curtis (*Antrim, S.*
Cranborne, Viscount
Cross, H. Shepherd (*Bolton*)
Crossley, Sir Savile
Dalkeith, Earl of
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dorington, Rt. Hon. Sir J. E.
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir Wm. Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Hart
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Ed.
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
FitzGerald, Sir Robt. Penrose
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S. W.*
Fyler, John Arthur
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (*Elgin & Nrn*
Gore, Hn. G R C. Ormsby-(*Salop*
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
Greene, Hy. D. (*Shrewsbury*)
Hambro, Charles Eric
Hamilton, Marq. of (*Londondy*
Hanbury, Rt. Hn. Robt. Wm.
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Heath, James (*Staffs., N. W.*)
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T
Hogg, Lindsay
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Hoult, Joseph
Kemp, Lieut.-Colonel George
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir J. H.
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*
Keswick, William
Knowles, Lees
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*
Lawrence, Sir Jos. (*Monm'th*)
Lawson, John Grant
Lee, A. H. (*Hants, Fareham*)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Long, Rt. Hn Walter (*Bristol, S.*
Lowe, Francis William
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*
Lucas, Reg'ld J. (*Portsmouth*)
Lundon, W.
Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred
Macdona, John Cumming
Maconochie, A. W.
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
M'Govern, T.
M'Iver, Sir Lewis (*Edinb'rgh, W*
M'Killop, Jas. (*Stirlingshire*)
Majendie, James A. H.
Middlemore, Jn. Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morgan, D. J. (*Walthamstow*)
Morrell, George Herbert
Morrison, James Archibald
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Murray, Rt Hn A. Graham (*Bute*
Nicol, Donald Ninian
O'Brien, Patrick (*Kilkenny*)
Pease, H. Pike (*Darlington*)
Percy, Earl
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Randles, John S.
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Remnant, Jas. Farquharson
Renshaw, Sir Charles Bine
Renwick, George
Ridley, Hon M. W. (*Stalybridge*
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Scott, Sir S. (*Marylebone, W.*)
Seely, Chas. Hilton (*Lincoln*)
Sinclair, Louis (*Romford*)
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, H C (*North'mb Tyneside*
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Jn. M.
Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Talbot, Rt Hn J. G. (*Oxf'd Univ.*
Taylor, Austin (*East Toxteth*)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Vincent, Sir Edgar (*Exeter*)
Walker, Col. William Hall
Walrond, Rt Hn Sir William H.
Webb, Col. William George
Whiteley, H. (*Ashton-u.-Lyne*)
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Williams, Colonel R. (*Dorset*)
Wilson, A. Stanley (*York, E.R.*
Wilson-Todd, W. H. (*Yorks.*)
Wodehouse, Rt Hn E. R. (*Bath*
Wortley, Rt. Hon C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

Another New Clause (Amendment of 44 and 45 Vic., c. 58, s. 42.)—(*Colonel Welby.*)

Brought up, and read the first time.

*COLONEL WELBY next moved a new clause with the object of amending Section 42 of the Army Act, by inserting words to provide that in cases where there was a difference between a colonel of a regiment and his subordinate officer, or between a colonel of a regiment and a general commanding, the Commander-in-Chief should cause the complaint to be inquired into and, if satisfied of the justice of the complaint, take the necessary steps to give full redress to the complainant. It seemed to him that in these cases the officer should be entitled to as much justice as the private soldier. The words in the Army Act only directed the Commander-in Chief to examine into a complaint of this kind, and he believed there had been many cases in the Army in which the Commander-in Chief had settled the matter solely on his own authority. That had often left a sense of injustice in the minds of those against whom the ruling had been given, and he thought that if that sense of injustice was removed it would be a very good thing for the Army. The words he proposed would, he believed, have that effect. They would not interfere with those cases which were brought directly under the notice of the Commander-in-Chief, as in the instance of a General officer commanding an Army Corps, but they would apply to the cases indirectly brought under his notice—cases in which he had no personal knowledge of the circumstances. He wanted to secure full and proper inquiry, as it sometimes occurred that when a high official dealt with these questions on his own authority he was secretly influenced by other considerations. What was already considered a right course in the case of the private soldier must be equally just in the case of an officer.

Question proposed.

MR. BRODRICK said he fully appreciated the object of the hon. and gallant Member, but he hoped he would not press his proposal, which he assured him would not advance the object he had in view, and would, without further amendment, appear to prejudice the right of appeal to the Secretary of State for War and to the King.

*COLONEL WELBY pointed out that by Section 42 the Commander-in-Chief was required to examine, which meant direct personal inquiry, while he proposed to provide that the Commander-in-Chief should cause inquiry to be made.

Question, "That the Clause be read a second time," put and negatived.

Another New Clause (Special Enlistments.)—(*Major Seely.*)

Brought up and read the first time.

Proposed new Clause—

"(1) Subject to the provisions of this section no recruit shall, after the passing of this Act, be enlisted in the Regular Forces unless he can produce a certificate of his birth to the recruiter, nor unless he is eighteen years of age.

"(2) A recruit may be enlisted without the previous production of his birth certificate if the approving officer shall be satisfied that every reasonable effort has been made to obtain such certificate, and that it is not practicable to obtain it, but in that case such officer shall state in writing what steps have been taken to obtain such certificate, and why he is of opinion that it is impracticable to obtain it.

"(3) A recruit may be enlisted who is known or believed by the approving officer to be more than seventeen, but less than eighteen years of age, if such approving officer shall be of opinion that, by reason of exceptional physical health and development, such recruit will make an efficient soldier; but in that case such officer shall state in writing the height, weight, and chest measurement of such recruit, and any other circumstance which shall appear to such officer to justify the enlistment of such recruit. Every written statement made by an approving officer in pursuance of this section shall be transmitted to the Secretary of State, and a return of all such statements made in any year shall be laid before Parliament not later than the presentation of the annual Army Estimates to the House of Commons in the year following.

"(5) This section shall be construed together with Part II. of the Army Act, and the expression 'approving officer' means the officer mentioned in Sub-clause (e) of Sub-section 4 of Section 80 of that Act."

MAJOR SEELY, in moving the clause, said it embodied the Resolution unanimously agreed to a week ago on the Motion of the Secretary of State, modified to the extent of allowing recruits to be accepted at the age of seventeen under exceptional circumstances. It was therefore entirely uncontentious. It had been suggested that it was contrary to precedent for the actual words of the clause to be embodied in such a Bill. He did not know whether it was so or not, but it might be possible to place words to the same effect in the recruiting regulations or in an Army Order. It was important that the matter should be dealt with, because, although the Secretary of State was heart and soul with them in this respect, those who administered the law for him could not be expected to be so anxious to carry out the rule, they naturally being desirous of getting as many recruits as possible. He begged to move.

Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Lord STANLEY, Lancashire, Westhoughton) said it was his right hon. friend's intention to carry out, not only in the letter, but in the spirit, the pledges he gave on a previous occasion. He begged to assure the House that such words would be put in the recruiting regulations as would show those who were responsible, either at headquarters or elsewhere, for getting recruits, that his right hon. friend was determined to adhere to the resolution at which the House arrived unanimously a few days ago.

LORD HUGH CECIL (Greenwich) said the language of the Financial Secretary was a great disappointment to him. The information privately conveyed to many Members of the House, who were consequently not present, was that with one trifling exception this new clause would be embodied in an Army Order. Substantially the proposals were accepted, but they were not to be put into an Act of Parliament, but issued by administrative order. If the Government were not prepared to adhere to that understanding he would be obliged to move to report Progress.

MR. BRODRICK said he was at a loss to understand his noble friend's speech. He knew of no understanding of the kind.

LORD HUGH CECIL said he would substitute the word intimation; he did not want to use an offensive phrase.

MR. BRODRICK said his noble friend had made him a full statement of what passed, and he certainly did not convey any impression of the kind to him. What the noble Lord now asked for was entirely at variance with what he had said on a previous occasion. He then had distinctly said that the military authorities could not call upon recruits to furnish certificates of birth, but that all diligence would be used in seeing that the physical equivalent of the age which the recruits represented themselves to be was obtained. He also denied that his noble friend had made any promise to present a special report to the House on each recruit taken under the recognised standard.

LORD HUGH CECIL said he was sorry, but he must move to report Progress, because, believing that this matter was to be settled in the way he had described, many hon. friends of his were not present. It would be discourteous and unfair to proceed with the discussion when they were not present. He moved to report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress; and ask leave to sit again."—(*Lord Hugh Cecil.*)

MR. BRODRICK said he really must complain a little of his noble friend. His noble friend, as he understood, had not himself been a party to any arrangement, but spoke on hearsay, and his suggestion was not supported, so far as he was aware, by anybody who had any agreement with the Financial Secretary. In the absence of any such statement he thought his noble friend was going very far.

LORD HUGH CECIL: I am not making any imputation. I simply say as a matter of convenience.

MAJOR SEELY said that in his view the noble Lord the Member for Greenwich was right in his statement. He himself received, as he understood, a distinct assurance from the Financial Secretary that the provisions in this Clause should be substantially adhered to, especially with regard to the return being furnished which was referred to in Section 3.

THE CHAIRMAN said that question could not be raised now. The question he had to put was to report Progress.

Major SEELY said he was merely explaining reasons which he thought might lead to an agreement on the matter. He understood that it was plainly stated that the provisions should be broadly adhered to. Such a vague statement as had been made by his noble friend the Financial Secretary was not what he had been led to expect, and in that respect he entirely supported his noble friend the Member for Greenwich.

*Sir CHARLES DILKE said he was one of those who was informed of the nature of the arrangement. It was by a mere accident that he was present, and he knew that several hon. Members were absent in consequence of the intimation they had received.

Lord STANLEY said this was one of those disagreeable incidents in which two persons disagreed as to what had happened. When his hon. and gallant friend and he discussed this Amendment, he told him that it would be impossible to accept it as it stood, including the provision insisting upon the production of a birth certificate, because, as he pointed out, his right hon. friend had clearly shown that, in his opinion, it was not feasible, even if it were desirable. He certainly intended to convey, and in his humble judgment did convey, to his hon. and gallant friend that all the Government could do was to put into the rules for recruiting such words as would bear out to the fullest extent the resolution unanimously arrived at the other day in the House, a resolution, which, he thought, it was clearly shown would go far towards meeting the present Amendment.

Mr. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.) hoped the Motion would be pressed to a division. There was no question on which there had been more shilly-shallying for years than this, and it was time it was brought to a definite issue. No valid reason had ever been assigned why a birth certificate should not be asked for.

Lord HUGH CECIL said he hoped the Government would accept the Motion. If not, it really was treating their supporters with, he would not say unfairness, but with very great discourtesy. ["Oh!"] He was not imputing anything to his right hon. friend. If a misunderstanding arose, and a great number of Members who took an interest in the subject were consequently absent, it would be only the ordinary courtesy with which the Government treated the House to agree to the Motion to report Progress.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 45; Noes, 140. (Division List No. 55.)

AYES.

Allen, Chas. P. (*Glos., Stroud*)
Asquith, Rt. Hon. Herbt. Hy.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Beaumont, Wentworth C. B.
Bell, Richard
Brigg, John
Caldwell, James
Causton, Richard Knight
Cawley, Frederick
Davenport, William Bromley
Davies, Alfred (*Carmarthen*)
Dewar, John A. (*Inverness-sh.*)
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Duncan, J. Hastings
Evans, Sir F. H. (*Maidstone*)
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-
Helme, Norval Watson
Jones, Wm. (*Carnarvonshire*)
Kearley, Hudson E.
Leigh, Sir Joseph
Leng, Sir John
Pirie, Duncan V.
Rickett, J. Compton
Roberts, John Bryn (*Eifion*)
Runciman, Walter
Schwann, Charles E.
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Spencer, Rt Hon C R (*Northants*
Strachey, Sir Edward
Taylor, Theodore C (*Radcliffe*
Thomas, David A. (*Merthyr*)
Thomas, J. A. (*Glam., Gower*)
Tomkinson, James
Walton, J. Lawson (*Leeds, S.*)
Wason, J. Cathcart (*Orkney*)
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Whiteley, G. (*York, W. R.*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Wilson, F. W. (*Norfolk, Mid*)
Woodhouse, Sir J T (*Huddersf'd*

Tellers for the Ayes—
Lord Hugh Cecil and Major Seely.

NOES

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atkinson, Right Hon. John
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Man'r*
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (*Leeds*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bignold, Arthur
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith
Bousfield, William Robert
Brassey, Albert
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Bull, William James
Cavendish, V C W (*Derbysh.*)
Cecil, Evelyn (*Aston Manor*)
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Charrington, Spencer
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
Coghill, Douglas Harry

Colomb, Sir John Chas. Ready
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Corbett, A. Cameron (*Glasg.*)
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Cox, Irwin Edwd. Bainbridge
Craig, Chas. Curtis (*Antrim, S.*)
Cranborne, Viscount
Cross, H. Shepherd (*Bolton*)
Crossley, Sir Savile
Dalkeith, Earl of
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Denny, Colonel
Dorington, Rt. Hon. Sir J. E.
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Doxford, Sir Wm. Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Hart
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Ed.
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S.W.*
Fyler, John Arthur
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (*Elgin & Nrn*
Gore, HonGRC Ormsby-(*Salop*
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
Greene, Hy. D. (*Shrewsbury*)
Hambro, Charles Eric
Hamilton, Marq. of (*Londondy*
Hanbury, Rt. Hn. Robt. Wm.
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Heath, James (*Staffs., N. W.*)
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Hope, J. F. (*Sheff., B'tside*)
Hoult, Joseph
Johnstone, Heywood
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir J. H.
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*
Keswick, William
Knowles, Lees
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*
Lawrence, Sir Jos. (*Monm'th*)
Lawson, John Grant
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Fredk. N. S.
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Long, Rt Hon Walter (*Bristol, S.*
Lowe, Francis William
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*)
Lucas, Reg'ld J. (*Portsmouth*)
Lundon, W.
Macdona, John Cumming
Maconochie, A. W.
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
M'Govern, T.
M'Iver Sir Lewis (*Edinburgh W*)
M'Killop, Jas. (*Stirlingshire*)
Majendie, James A. H.
Middlemore, Jn. Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morgan, D. J. (*Walthamstow*)
Morrell, George Herbert
Morrison, James Archibald
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mount, William Arthur
Murray Rt Hn. A Graham (*Bute*)
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Pease, H. Pike (*Darlington*)
Percy, Earl
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Randles, John S.
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Remnant, Jas. Farquharson
Renshaw, Sir Charles Bine
Renwick, George
Ridley, Hn. M. W. (*Stalybridge*)
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Scott, Sir S. (*Marylebone, W.*)
Seely, Charles Hilton (*Lincoln*)
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (*Renfrew*)
Sinclair, Louis (*Romford*)
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Smith, H C. (*North'mb. Tyneside*
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Jn. M.
Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Talbot, Rt Hn J. G. (*Oxf'd Univ.*
Taylor, Austin (*East Toxteth*)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Vincent, Sir Edgar (*Exeter*)
Walker, Col. William Hall
Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir W. H.
Webb, Col. William George
Whiteley, H. (*Ashton-u.-Lyne*)
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Williams, Colonel R. (*Dorset*)
Wilson, A. S. (*York, E. R.*)
Wilson-Todd, W. H. (*Yorks.*)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (*Bath*
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES.—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

Original Question put, and negatived.

*COLONEL WELBY said he wished to bring certain matters to the attention of the Government, in the hope that they might be remedied. He wished especially to direct attention to the insufficient breakfast, costing 1½d. which, was given to troops on the march. That was not much for a soldier to start on a march of twenty or thirty miles. There had been a great improvement in the feeding of the soldier in recent years; and he would ask whether there ought not to be some increase in this scale of charges. A man ought to be given a good square meal before he started on a march in a morning. He did not think the cost would be very great. As it was the men had to supplement their breakfast out of their pay. That did not tend to encourage recruiting, as the men talked about the amount of money they had to spend. He therefore hoped that the scale would be somewhat increased, as had been done in 1892.

Schedule agreed to.

Preamble agreed to.

Bill reported, without Amendment; to be read the third time on Monday next.

PISTOLS BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

*MR. HELME (Lancashire, Lancaster) said he asked the House in the interests of public safety to pass the Second Reading of this Bill, which proposed to strengthen the law in order to prevent the sale of pistols to children and young persons, and thereby prevent the accidents that they heard of from time to time. There was scarcely a day that disastrous and fatal accidents from the use of pistols by young persons were not reported. Even to-day there was a report of the death of a child, shot by his brother. The principle of the Bill had met general approval outside the House, and with the support of the police and coroners. The Secretary to the Coroners' Society of England and Wales had written expressing his deep regret that the Bill of 1893 and later Bills had to be dropped, and assured him of their assistance in this endeavour. The police were also of opinion that a measure of this kind was needed; and the principle of the measure had been favoured by the opinions of His Majesty's Judges Grantham and Bingham, who from the Bench had spoken disapprovingly of the indiscriminate sale of revolvers, and stated that some restriction should be placed on the sale of toy pistols. In 1893, and in 1895, the House of Commons assented to the Second Reading of Bills for this purpose; but, through the accidents of Parliamentary procedure, they were later discarded. The hon. Member for West Leeds, Mr. H. J. Gladstone, when supporting this Bill said—

> "Piles and piles of papers at the Home Office, including letters from Judges and Coroners, urged that some restrictive legislation should be passed in respect to pistols and toy pistols."

The proposal in the present Bill was that whoever sold a pistol should keep a record of the sale, which record should be open to the police; and that a pistol should not be supplied to any person who was not able to produce a game licence, or a licence to carry a gun. With regard to children, it was proposed that no one under the age of sixteen should be able to purchase or hire a pistol. In order to meet the views of those who desired to avoid too great restrictions of the rights of the public, the Bill had been drafted in a very moderate form; and he hoped it would meet with the approval of those who were solicitous for the lives and safety of the people.

MR. WHITE RIDLEY (Stalybridge) said, as one who had some share in drawing up the Bill, he wished to second the Motion. The promoters of the Bill had tried to take out anything that might interfere with the legitimate trade of gunmaking. It was provided that anyone who wished to purchase a pistol should produce the licence which he was compelled by law to have. Their only object was to prevent accidents, which happened very frequently, and which were caused by boys playing about with pistols. They had put in a provision which would prevent any complications arising in connection with cadet corps or small rifle corps. Section 4 would obviate any difficulty of that sort. In these circumstances he sincerely hoped the House would allow the Bill to pass and be referred to a Committee.

* THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. AKERS DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's) said that, as far as the Home Office was concerned, there was no objection to the Second Reading of the Bill. The hon. Members who had spoken in support of the Bill had submitted it to the consideration of the Department, and no objection was taken to the Second Reading. It was quite possible, however, that Amendments might have to be introduced in Committee, but he had no objection to offer at that stage.

Bill read a second time.

*MR. HELME moved to refer the Bill to the Standing Committee on Law.

SIR FREDERICK BANBURY said he thought the Standing Committee on Trade would be better.

*MR. HELME said he had no objection to accept the suggestion.

*MR. AKERS DOUGLAS said it would be better to send the Bill to the Standing Committee on Law. Legal points of view would have to be considered; and, moreover, there was a great deal of work before the Standing Committee on Trade.

Bill committed to the Standing Committee on Law, etc.

PUBLIC HOUSES (HOURS OF CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [10th March], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*The Lord Advocate*).

Debate arising.

SIR J. STIRLING-MAXWELL (Glasgow, College) said there was a very general desire on the part of the licensing authorities that this Bill should be passed. The only city which had not asked for it was Edinburgh. He knew that the right place for a reform of this kind would be in the Government Licensing Bill, now before the House; and he had great hopes that the Lord Advocate would take this opportunity of stating that he would incorporate it in his measure.

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire), said that he was well aware that the question was one which excited very considerable interest; and he was quite acquainted with the arguments which were used on the subject. It was a matter which excited very serious discussion; and it could be perfectly well embodied by an Amendment to the Government Bill. There would be no difficulty in raising the question, and if it were raised on Monday, he could promise his hon. friend that it would have his serious consideration. In these circumstances, he felt sure that his hon. friend would not press the Bill now, because in the present state of the House, he could not feel himself bound by any decision that might be come to. The whole matter would be carefully fought out in the Grand Committee, to which he hoped the Licensing Bill would be sent; and he should be sorry to prejudice the question by having to vote against it on the present occasion. Therefore he moved the adjournment of the debate.

SIR J. STIRLING-MAXWELL said he gladly assented to the Motion of his right hon. friend, who admitted that the question could be raised on the Government Bill, and would not be ruled out of order.

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) said he thought it was a pity that the Lord Advocate did not agree to the Second Reading; as on a previous occasion the House of Commons passed the Bill, which was defeated in the House of Lords. He did not see how the Lord Advocate could oppose the Bill, the Government having assented to it previously. By giving the Bill a Second Reading the House would again put on record its view; and the Government could prevent it going further if they thought fit. He hoped the Lord Advocate would withdraw his Motion.

SIR FREDERICK BANBURY said he was extremely surprised at the doctrine just enunciated by the hon. Gentleman, viz., that when a Member of the Government assented to the Bill, the House should immediately agree with the Government. The hon. Gentleman thought the Bill was a good one, but he did not agree. He was very much opposed to it; and it did not follow because the Government agreed to it that everyone else was bound to accept it. Surely the hon. Member must be aware that many hon. Members on this side of the House had of late certainly not agreed with the Government. If the Lord Advocate were to withdraw his Motion, and assent to the Second Reading of the Bill, he should be obliged to adduce reasons why the Bill should not be passed. The question as to whether the House should now adjourn appeared to him to admit of no reasonable objection. Of late years there had been a considerable number of Bills on this subject, and he did not at all agree that their enactment had altogether been advantageous. Some of them had been hurried through the House, as the hon. Gentleman would hurry this Bill. He was at a loss to understand the action of the hon. Gentleman. He had heard the hon. Gentleman state over and over again that the idea of legislating at a few minutes to midnight was wrong. Only a few days ago, the hon. Member pointed out that it was impossible to consider a measure at a few minutes' notice.

And, it being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a second time, and committed for Thursday, 23rd April.

Adjourned at two minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 3rd April, 1903.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [Lords] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH.)

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz. :—

Nantwich Urban District Council Bill [Lords]; Queensland Investment and Land Mortgage Bill [Lords]; Old Bridewell Burying Ground Bill [Lords]; Plymouth and Stonehouse Gas Bill [Lords]; Western Trust Bill [Lords]. Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz. :—

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time upon Monday next.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, no Standing Orders are applicable, viz. :—

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time upon Monday next.

North Middlesex Gas Bill, as amended, considered; A Clause added; Bill to be read the third time.

Local Government Provisional Order (Housing of the Working Classes) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill, read a second time, and committed.

PETITIONS.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE BILL.

Petition from London, against; to lie upon the Table.

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Alloa; Johnstone; and, Kinross; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION IN THE METROPOLIS.

Petition from Bromley, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petitions against: from Anstruther Wester; Anstruther Easter; and, Kilrenny; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Two Petitions from Glasgow, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Kirkcudbright; and, Edinburgh; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition of the Scottish Temperance Federation, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

Petitions against: from West Derby; and, Wandsworth; to lie upon the Table.

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.

Petitions against establishment: from Stirling; and, West Calder; to lie upon the Table.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.

Petitions against: from Bilston; Bow; Handsworth; Birmingham (two); Moseley; Exeter; Wolverhampton; Cannock; Islington; and, Kingston-upon-Hull; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.

Petition from Wandsworth, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Ebbw Vale; Earlsfield; and, Reddish; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

CERTIFIED DAY INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS (PARLIAMENTARY GRANT.)

Copy presented, of Recommendation of the Secretary of State for the Home Department that the sum contributed out of moneys provided by Parliament to Managers of any Certified Day Industrial Schools shall, under certain conditions, continue to be paid, in respect of children absent, owing to an epidemic [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Return showing the Expenditure from the Grant for Public Education in Scotland in the year 1902, with Statistics [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

BRITISH MUSEUM.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 2nd March.—*Mr. John Morley*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 105.]

CROWN'S NOMINEE ACCOUNT.

Abstract account presented, of Receipts and Payments of the Treasury Solicitor, in the year ended 31st December 1902, in the Administration of Estates on behalf of the Crown, and Alphabetical List of Intestates' Estates in respect of which Letters of Administration were granted to the Treasury Solicitor as Crown's Nominee, and of other cases (partial Intestacies, etc.) in which accounts were opened in the Books of the Treasury Solicitor in the same year in respect of moneys received by him as Crown's Nominee [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 106.]

SUPERANNUATIONS.

Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 26th March, 1903, declaring that for the due and efficient discharge of the duties of the office of Director of Naval Education, professional or other peculiar qualifications not ordinarily to be acquired in the Public Service are required [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Medical Referee under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

MR. BELL (Derby): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that Mr. H. Langley Browne, the medical referee for the West Bromwich district, appointed by the Home Office under the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1897, is acting as medical adviser to the Great Western Railway Company in the case of a man named Ernest Steventon, who is making a claim under the Workmen's Compensation Act; and whether he can take steps to secure that in any application by this workman for arbitration with respect to the compensation payable to him, this medical referee shall not be appointed to report on the nature and extent of the injuries sustained by the claimant.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Akers Douglas.*) I have communicated with Mr. H. Langley Browne, and he informs me that the statement in the Question is correct, but that if occasion should arise for a report upon the case, he quite understands that arrangements would have to be made for its being taken by another of the referees appointed for the district. He further informs me that in point of fact he has never been called upon to act in his capacity as medical referee under the Workmen's Compensation Act since his appointment in 1898. I have felt it my duty, however, to point out to him that the position which he holds of medical adviser to a railway company is not compatible with that of medical referee.

Promotion in the Dublin Post Office.

MR. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that two second division clerks have applied for clerkships in the office of the Controller, Sorting Office, General Post Office, Dublin, and whether it is intended to accede to their request; and whether, seeing that these positions have hitherto been considered to be confined to the sorting clerks and telegraphists attached to the sorting office, and that the majority of these officers, though eligible for promotion in their own department, are practically debarred from the positions held by the second division clerk, he will consider the advisability of confining the positions in question to the officials of the sorting department.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) Yes; one applied in the year 1900 and one last year, but the vacancies were filled by the promotion of sorting clerks and telegraphists. I can make no promise, but I do not anticipate having to go outside the sorting office to fill any clerkships in that office in the near future.

Postage Regulations.

LIEUT-COL. PRYCE-JONES (Montgomery Boroughs): To ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been directed to the fact that orders by post requiring only the halfpenny postage are erroneously overcharged as letters; and, if so, will he consider the desirability of amending the regulations to obviate such inconvenience to the trading public.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) I do not know to what case the hon. and gallant Member refers, but if he will be good enough to furnish me with particulars I will have inquiry made. The question of revising the existing regulation of the halfpenny post is now occupying my attention.

Excise Administration of Assam.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether an inquiry has been instituted into the allegations made against the Excise administration of Assam in a memorandum issued by Mr. James Buckingham, C.I.E., on behalf of the tea planters; if so, what was the nature of the inquiry, and when will the Report be published.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) The Chief Commissioner of Assam has referred the complaints and recommendations contained in Mr. Buckingham's memorandum to the local officers for inquiry and report. I cannot say when the investigation will be completed.

Irish National Education—Estimate of Cost of Schools.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will say whether the revised scale of estimates under Plan VI.A for the building of national schools in Ireland is yet completed; and, if so, whether managers who have erected schools which exceeded the estimate in consequence of increase of cost of labour and materials will be entitled to any further grants in respect of their outlay.

(*Answered by Mr. Hayes Fisher.*) No revision of estimates of cost of national schools has yet been arrived at. If it be decided to increase the estimates of cost it is contemplated that the new scale will be prospective and will not increase the amount of grant in cases where schools have been built in the past.

British Capital Invested outside the United Kingdom.

MR. SEELY (Lincoln): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state to what year his estimate of £60,000,000 as the profit derived from investment of capital outside the United Kingdom refers; and whether he can give the amounts for the previous five years.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) The figure of £60,000,000 given in the answer on the 26th ultimo† applied to the year 1900–1, the latest for which exact particulars are available. It does not represent the whole of the profits derived from British capital invested abroad, but only that part which can be identified from the Income Tax statistics. The figures for the ten years 1891–2 to 1900–1 are given in detail on page 198 of the 45th Report of the Board of Inland Revenue (1902).

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† See page 295.

Irish School Teachers, Pensions—Case of Michael O'Sullivan.

Mr. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the case of Michael O'Sullivan, formerly schoolmaster at Glen, N.S., Aghort, Ballinskelligs, co. Kerry, who, since his retirement in October 1901, has only got credit for thirty-six years service instead of thirty-seven, and for fifty-seven years of age instead of sixty; and to the fact that his pension is reduced thereby from £42 10s. to £32; and whether he can take steps to secure this ex-teacher his full pension.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The returns of age made to the Commissioners of National Education by this ex-teacher, when he was in their service, showed that he was born in 1844. He joined the pension scheme on the distinct understanding, fully acquiesced in by him, that he was born in that year, and paid the appropriate premiums. When he retired he was fifty-seven years of age, and had thirty-six years service after the age of twenty-one. He was granted the pension fixed by the Act for such age and service.

Ireland—Waste Crown Lands.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state the area of waste Crown lands over which no landlords have rights of any kind in Ireland; and whether he will consider the advisability of vesting such lands in Irish public bodies for the benefit of the community after afforestation or other reclamation had been undertaken; and whether it is proposed to vest such lands in the Estates Commission or otherwise.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) All waste lands must be vested either in the Crown or some private owner, and sub-interests may be created in and rights exercised over both by many individuals. It is therefore quite impossible to answer the hon. Member's Question.

Labourers' Cottages in the Boyle District.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state what sum, if any, stood to the credit of Boyle No. 1. District Council under the Labourers' Clause in the Land Act of 1896, and how much it was proposed to expend on the erection of labourers' cottages in Boyle No. 1 District; and whether, seeing that the amount to credit of the district under the Land Act of 1896 would have paid the difference between income and outgoings on these cottages when erected, can he state in what stage the Council's schemes now stand, and whether the amount is hypothecated under the Irish Land Bill.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The hon. Member presumably refers to the Exchequer contribution created by Section 5 (2) (b) of the 54 and 55 Vic., c. 48, towards the cost of providing labourers' cottages. Out of this fund a sum of £158 was paid on the 1st instant to the County Council on behalf of the Boyle No. 1 District Council in aid of the cost of cottages erected, and a further sum of £1,513 was paid on the same date to the Commissioners of Public Works in reduction of loans advanced for such cottages. The scheme sanctioned in 1900 provided for the erection of thirty-two cottages with acre allotments. Of these, twenty-five cottages were completed in February last, and five were in progress. In reply to the concluding inquiry, the Exchequer contribution forms part of the guarantee fund for the purposes of the Act above quoted, and of subsequent Purchase Acts, including the Bill now before Parliament.

Dublin Metropolitan Police—Dismissal of P. C. Thomas Hackett.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the case of Dublin Metropolitan Police Constable Thomas Hackett, No. 76 F, of Kingstown Dublin Metropolitan Police Station, who was dismissed from the force on 23rd

July, 1902; and whether, seeing that during the two years which this policeman had served he was twice commended for diligence as a peace officer, and received a money grant for activity in the service, and that the alleged cause of his dismissal is ill-health, he will grant an inquiry into his case with a view either to his re-instatement or to such compensation being made to him as his case merits.

(*Answered by Mr Wyndham.*) Ex-Constable Hackett was discharged from the force in July, 1902, having been certified by the medical officer of the force to be unfit for further service. He was awarded a gratuity of £5 3s. 7d. on discharge, the maximum amount allowed by statute. Up to the pre ent he has declined to accept this gratuity. He is not eligible for re-admission to the force.

Orange Procession at Culready, County Derry.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that on 20th March a number of Orangemen returning to their homes in Culready, County Derry, were stopped in the public road by a body of police, and obliged to proceed to their homes by a route two and a half miles longer; and, if so, will he state by what authority this action was taken by the police; and if he will take steps to secure that such action will not be repeated.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) A number of Orangemen, accompanied by a drumming party, proposed to march through a locality where, in the opinion of the police, there was good reason to believe that danger of collision with a rival party existed. At the suggestion of the police the Orangemen desisted, and party heat, which might otherwise have been engendered, was thus, with their co-operation, avoided.

Imprisonment of Private Peter Harvey.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been directed to the case of a private soldier named Peter Harvey, who has been sentenced to three months imprisonment at Parkhurst, Isle of Wight; and whether, in view of the position of this man's mother, he will order his discharge from the service, and his return to the place he comes from.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) Will the hon. Member kindly address any communications he may like to make on this subject to the General Officer Commanding the District concerned, who is empowered, under Article 1,142 of the Pay Warrant, to deal with this class of discharge.

THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (LIGHTHOUSES) BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. CHARLES MCARTHUR (Liverpool Exchange) said the object of this Bill was to effect an important and much needed reform in the lighthouses of the United Kingdom. It proposed to transfer the whole administration of lighthouses, buoys, and beacons from the existing authorities to the Board of Trade, and to create a Committee representative of shipping and trade interests to assist the Board of Trade in such administration. Accordingly light dues were abolished, and, of course, in that case it was necessary as an incidental provision to provide for the payment of the charges for the light service out of the public revenue. It was therefore proposed to constitute representative Committees, representing the shipping trade and navigation to advise the Board of Trade in regard to the matters falling under their cognisance. He wished to point out that the powers of these Committees were to be advisory only, and they would not interfere with the discretion of the Board of Trade, and if the Board of Trade preferred to manage the light service without the assistance of any such Committees, it was not the intention of the promoters of this Bill to press it upon the Board of Trade. They simply wished this to go forward as an expression of the willingness of the commercial shipping interests to assist the Board of Trade in every way possible. It was necessary for him to show to the House why the Board of Trade was the best substitute for the existing system. He would not weary the House with technicalities, and he would compress his remarks within as small limits as the case would permit. What was the existing system? There were three lighthouse boards, one for England, another for Scotland, and a third for Ireland. The dues were payable by those concerned with shipping, and out of the dues so collected the light service was maintained. The Lighthouse Board for England was known as Trinity House, for Scotland as the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses, and for Ireland as the Commissioners of Irish Lights. The Board of Trade had a certain supervising control over these three Boards, and it had to approve of any financial scheme they brought forward for the erection of new works, and in the case of any difference arising between Trinity House and the other two Boards, the Board of Trade acted as a Court of Appeal between them. The first objection he raised to this arrangement was that the existing Boards were not representative of the payers of dues. They had no statutory representation on the Board. His next objection was that those who composed the Boards were not qualified by practical knowledge to deal properly with the very important functions entrusted to them. Take the case of Trinity House. It was an ancient institution, closely associated with history, and in criticising Trinity House no one would say a word disrespectful of that time-honoured institution. The governing body of Trinity House consisted of twenty-four Elder Brethren—eleven honorary, and thirteen active. The honorary members were persons of great distinction, and their presence upon that Board gave it a dignity and prestige which it could not otherwise possess. They did not, however, take part in the practical work, which was done by the active members. The active brethren consisted of retired officers of the Navy or the Mercantile Marine, who had served their various callings. As he had already stated, there were no shipowners' representatives at Trinity House, nor was there any guarantee for the presence of engineers with special knowledge. He had been looking into the ages of these gentlemen, and he found that two of them were between sixty and seventy years of age, three between seventy and eighty, one between eighty and ninety, and one over ninety years of age. He thought hon. Members would admit that these men were not at that period of life when the greatest amount of activity was shown. The experience they possessed belonged to a remote period, and referred to a time when the sailing vessel was almost the exclusive ship of the day, and when steam had not come into general use.

With regard to the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses, this body was composed of the law officers for Scotland, the Lord Provosts and Provosts of the chief ports, the eldest bailies of Edinburgh and Glasgow, and the sheriffs of a large number of counties abutting on the coast. There was no provision for any kind of expert knowledge or for the presence of a nautical man on that Board. With regard to the Commissioners of Irish Lights, it was a heterogeneous body, numbering twenty-four, five of them *ex-officio*, and nineteen co-opted. The *ex-officio* members consisted of the Lord Mayor, the High Sheriff, and three aldermen of the city of Dublin. The co-opted members possessed no special qualifications, and he found that they included two shipowners, three noblemen, one land agent, one retired military man, a manufacturer, a dealer in chemical manures, a timber merchant, a wine merchant, and a distiller. He thought it would be obvious that a body so constituted could not be relied upon either for efficiency or economy, and on behalf of the shipping interests he might state that they were quite satisfied that whatever might be the personal qualifications of those gentlemen, nevertheless the proceedings of the Board had been characterised by very grave extravagance and inefficiency. The principle underlying this question of light dues was that they should be limited to an amount reasonably necessary for the requirements of the light service. That principle would be fully recognised, but the experience of the past showed that it was more honoured in the breach than in the observance. The worst offender in this matter was Trinity House, which had had sole control of these lights up to the year 1855. They accumulated a large surplus which they devoted to pensions and other charitable objects. That was found fault with by the shipping community, who did not wish their money to be devoted to charitable objects, and the Commission of 1855 strongly condemned that practice. Accordingly, by the Merchant Act of 1855, the financial control of the light system was transferred from Trinity House to the Board of Trade. The Board of Trade collected substantially the amount required, but in the year 1884 further charges were placed by Parliament upon the Mercantile Marine Fund, which the revenues of that fund were unable to meet; and consequently the Board of Trade had to collect, under the name of light dues, additional sums to pay deficits on other expenditure. During the period from 1884 to 1899, the Board of Trade collected £1,250,000 in excess of the requirements of the light service, which they devoted to other charges. That was very strongly objected to by the shipowners, and a Departmental Committee was appointed in 1896, which sat under the Chairmanship of Mr. Leonard Courtney, and while that Committee vindicated the Board of Trade, at the same time it held that this money should not be devoted to other purposes. Consequently it was decided that in future the Light Dues should be confined to Lighthouse purposes.

He might be told that in consequence of that there was a reduction of £100,000 in the Light Dues, but that was because from 1899 the Board of Trade ceased to exact under the name of Light Dues, money which had been before taken for entirely different purposes. From the shipowners' point of view it was simply the stopping of a wrong course of action, but it did not restore to them the £1,250,000 which had been extracted from them. The result of the Mercantile Marine Fund being relieved of these charges was that the lighthouse authorities had a great deal more money to spend, and it appeared to them that the more money they had to spend the more free they were in spending it. There had been a great growth of expenditure, and if they compared the total expenditure between 1855 and 1883 with the expenditure between 1900 and 1902, they would find that it had gone up by 50 per cent. during that period. The expenditure upon new works was particularly noticeable. When the Departmental Committee of 1896, was sitting the representative of the various Lighthouse Boards appeared before the Committee and stated that the sum of £50,000 per annum would be sufficient for new works as far as he could see for many years to come. In the period from 1855 to 1883 the amount spent on new works was £49,250 per annum; from 1884 to 1889 the total increased to £62,973; whilst in the period between 1900 and 1902 since the Mercantile Marine Fund was relieved of those extra charges, it had increased to £97,745, or nearly double what the lighthouse authorities themselves estimated. The way this kind of extravagance had shown itself was in the accumulation of surplus funds. The Committee of 1896 deprecated any accumulation of money beyond £100,000, and they said that if more than that was collected it should be applied to the reduction of the dues. The fact was that at present those funds had accumulated to £345,973. That money was in the hands of the lighthouse authorities or the Board of Trade, and yet nothing had been done to reduce the dues.

It had long been a matter of complaint that shipowners had not been allowed any representation on these boards. In the year 1899 the Board of Trade went a little way in that direction by appointing an Advisory Commission to assist them in considering the expenditure upon new works. It consisted of twelve Members, including shipowners, underwriters, and representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, but the experience of that Committee had been most disappointing and unsatisfactory. They had, however, seen enough to assure them that there were many instances of extravagance not only in new works but in lighthouse expenditure. He would give one instance. The Irish Board proposed to spend £32,000 in replacing a yacht, called the "Princess Alexandra," which had been condemned. The Advisory Committee asked why it had been condemned, and they failed to elicit any satisfactory answer. They had the vessel examined by Lloyd's, and they received a report that by expending £500, the yacht could be made serviceable for several years. The Board of Trade sent their surveyor down and he said that this was quite an unnecessary outlay, because a sixteen knots speed was quite unnecessary, and that the accommodation was superfluous having regard to the small amount of time the Commissioners spent on board. At the next meeting the Irish Board brought in an Estimate for £26,000, but on the Advisory Committee proceeding to criticise the Estimate it was withdrawn, because it was declared that new steamers were not new works, and were outside the purview of the Committee. That was one of many examples which he could give. It had been the practice of the Advisory Board to address an annual letter to the President of the Board of Trade stating their views in regard to matters brought before them. He should like to read to the House some extracts from letters written by Mr. James C. Burns, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, to the President of the Board of Trade. He says—

> "While we fully appreciate your recognition, by the establishment of this Committee, of the claim of those whom we represent to have a voice in the expenditure of the Lighthouse Boards, yet the information we have been able to obtain so far, although not of large extent, confirms our belief that the three Lighthouse Boards ought to be reformed and reconstructed."

This letter was written in 1900, and in March 1901 a further letter stated—

> "We feel bound to repeat our statement of last year that the three Lighthouse Boards should be consolidated and reformed, as the more we inquire into the manner in which their affairs are conducted, the more we are strengthened in the opinion that the present arrangements conduce neither to efficiency nor economy."

In a letter dated the 21st of March, 1902, Mr. Burns wrote—

> "While we are glad to be of any service in eliciting information in regard to the expenditure of the three Boards on new works, and placing our views before you in regard to that expenditure, yet we cannot but express our regret that our powers of inquiry into the expenditure of these Boards are so limited, and by your recent decision, if adhered to, are still more curtailed. We also desire to say that in our opinion if the Lighthouse Boards are in the future to be conducted in an efficient and economical manner, measures of reform and consolidation must be adopted, and we would earnestly urge that this matter has your serious attention."

The shipping interest considered it altogether unjust that the expenses of the lighthouses should be defrayed by a charge on shipping, because the coasts were lighted not merely for the benefit of the Mercantile Marine, but for the benefit of the Royal Navy, and of passing vessels of all nations. The dangers of the sea arose to a large extent from proximity to the land, and it was the duty of every nation to light its coasts so as to cause as little danger as possible to passing vessels. It was, therefore, an Imperial duty—a duty which this country owed to other countries, and which was recognised by every country but our own and the Ottoman Empire. Freights were not fixed now by adding together the different charges which the shipowner had to bear. They were fixed by competition between the shipping of various nations; and as other nations were free from these charges, of course they were able to compete to advantage against the British shipowner, who was thus handicapped. When this matter had been brought before a Select Committee of that House, or any tribunal of that kind, it had pronounced in favour of the course recommended in this Bill. There were two Select Committees, in 1822 and 1834, which did not certainly make any distinct recommendation, but favourably commented on the proposal; but the Select Committee of 1845 was very distinct. The Report of that Committee said—

> "Having duly considered all these and many other circumstances, we are of opinion, and recommend to the House, that all expenses for the erection and maintenance of lighthouses, floating lights, buoys, and beacons on the coast of the United Kingdom, be henceforth defrayed out of public revenue."

He contended that the shipping interest had paid over and over again for these lighthouses, and the most they could do in handing them over to the Government was to say, "Take the lighting system which we have provided, and bear the public expense." The Royal Commission of 1858-61 alluded to this subject, and recommended that the expense of erecting and maintaining our lighthouses should be defrayed out of the public revenue. Then the Subsidies Committee last December recommended that Light Dues should be abolished. In fact, whenever the voice of the nation had been heard upon this matter it had been uniformly in favour of making this a national charge. It had been said that in other European countries the light charges were borne by the Government. That had been questioned. He wished to say that he had looked into the evidence, and he had the evidence from the different authorities before him. He was satisfied that the statement was correct, namely, that in all the European countries, with the exception he had named, the lighthouses were controlled by the State. In France, where they were said to have the best lights in the world, the total cost of maintaining the French lighting service was £60,000 as against our £500,000. Was not that an indication that there was something wrong? In Germany there were two classes of lights—the naval lights maintained by the Empire and the general lights maintained by each State in the Empire—and although the expenses were very much greater than the revenue they did this work in the interests of the country. In Belgium the light dues were abolished in 1896; and in Holland, Spain, Portugal, Austria-Hungary, Denmark, Italy, Norway, and Russia the cost of the lights was borne by the State. It was quite true that tonnage taxes were paid in some of these countries, but they had nothing to do with lights; they corresponded with our port and harbour charges. In this country ports and harbours were provided by private enterprise, and the bodies providing them charged dues for their upkeep, but on the Continent they were provided by the governments, and therefore tonnage rates were charged.

In conclusion he might be allowed to anticipate what objections could possibly be made to the proposal. It seemed to him that the only objection they could really apprehend would be what might be termed the Chancellor of the Exchequer's objection. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was not present, but he naturally assumed a forbidding aspect when any suggestion was made with regard to money. But they generally found that "where there's a will, there's a way." If it could be shown that any expenditure was really required in the public interest, the money would be forthcoming; and might he say on behalf of those he represented that if there was difficulty at the present time in providing for this in the Budget, they had no objection to postponing the operation of the Bill for a year, or such time as might be desired, so long as the principle of the Bill was admitted. Another objection that might be raised was that we should be relieving foreigners as well as our own subjects. That was no doubt the case, but there was no wish on the part of those he represented to discriminate between foreigners and British subjects. He commended the matter to the serious consideration of the House. All must feel that the shipping industry was passing through a very severe ordeal at the present time. They had to contend with subsidised and bounty-fed vessels and a great many advantages which British shipowners did not possess. They were greatly handicapped in the race they had to run, and he felt sure the House would be disposed to grant them such measure of relief in order to prevent this inequality. This was not only asked for by shipowners; it had been asked for by various Chambers of Commerce throughout the Empire, and by the Associated Chambers of Commerce, by underwriters, and by the whole of the mercantile community. They all asked that shipping should be relieved from this tax, and he commended the matter to the earnest consideration of the House. He begged to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed: "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. C. McArthur.*)

*SIR ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said he desired to support the principle of the Bill, which, he hoped, would also receive support from the Government, in order, at any rate, that the subject might be discussed thoroughly in Committee. He might say, as representing the shipping interest in the port of Hull, that the feeling had been consistently in favour of the total abolition of the light dues. Even when the legislation of 1898 took place—legislation which some of them criticised and opposed—it was felt that the proper course then to be pursued would have been the abolition of the dues, and certainly not the appointment, of the Advisory Committee, the failure of which had been a marked one, and which he was sorry to see was held to be a precedent in connection with this

Bill for the insertion of a clause providing for the appointment of another consultative Committee associated with the Board of Trade. The ground chiefly on which he supported the Bill was on the principle that a national duty ought to be performed by the nation. When they recollected also that the only exception which was at present made was that in favour of exempting the ships of the Royal Navy from the payment of light dues, it seemed to him that a national duty was not only unfulfilled, but that an advantage was positively taken in favour of the ships of the nation in exempting them from a payment which was placed not on the nation but on the shipowners. His hon. friend had referred to the feeling of the Chambers of Commerce, and he was able to emphasise what was said, because on more than one occasion he had taken part in the discussion of this question there. This was not, therefore, merely a shipowner's question. It had the support of the mercantile community—in other words, of a very large portion of the nation which contributed to the Consolidated Fund which, they maintained, ought to bear the impost. He would point out that if the result of this Bill should be to make the incidence of the burden fall upon the shoulders of the consumers—as was already alleged to be the case—he should certainly prefer that the incidence should be direct, and that so there should be a check on national expenditure rather than that it should be merely indirect. But it was always difficult to fix where such incidence really took place, and probably, owing to economic friction, as he might call it, it was a divided incidence. Now the principle of the Bill was that this was the performance of a national duty; but he would put it even higher than that, and say that it would be the performance of an international duty. And when they remembered that every maritime nation, except the one mentioned by his hon. friend, already performed that duty, surely there was a strong argument from experience for taking that course. They had to remember that this was not merely a question of the protection of property or the relief of property from a burden imposed on it: it was a question of saving life, and, above all, for inducing trade to come to this country. A safely lighted country was one which attracted trade, and one object of making our lights as attractive as possible was that it must be for the benefit of the nation as a whole. After all, the ocean was the international highway, and to light the highway at the cost of a particular class of persons, who were certainly not the only users of these lights, was like reverting to the old system of turnpike tolls. He maintained that sea commerce was a national benefit, and that the nation should bear the cost of inducing that trade to come safely to this country.

One of the strongest remarks made by his hon. friend who introduced this Bill was that in which he indicated the consequences of the present system. These were, he said, distinctly costly. But there was one particular case on which he would like to enlarge, because, having recently been in Canada, he knew the feeling that existed there in regard to these light dues. There was a feeling of resentment against the hardship which was produced by these dues in our great colony. Canada had difficult seas and estuaries to be navigated, and they needed a perfect system of lights, but Canada discharged that duty out of her own national funds. But Canada had a large coasting trade with the United States, which, nevertheless, imposed a tonnage tax on all Canadian shipping, not because Canada did not light her coasts, but because we in this country imposed a tax for lights on United States shipping. That United States tonnage tax was an impost of no slight amount, and it was strongly resented in Canada. It, therefore, became a matter of Imperial duty and interest in our association with our colonies to deal with this matter. He could not help thinking that the recommendation of the Shipping Subsidies Committee, which was the latest and most important pronouncement on the subject—was probably based largely on the consideration that the shipping interest had thus to bear very considerable burdens which were differential against our ships. His hon. friend had referred to the case of foreign bounties, and he believed that the very next Bill on the paper was a Bill for equalising the treatment of foreign and British ships on many matters. When they considered that our mercantile marine had to compete with foreign shipping under great comparative disadvantages, the

House ought to support this Bill. The mercantile marine had performed a great national service to the country during the South African war in transporting hundreds of thousands of troops without a single casualty, and therefore it had shown itself to be a great source of protection to the nation if the need should ever arise; we ought, therefore, to take care, on national grounds, that it was not unduly burdened.

He should like to say a word or two in regard to the legislation of 1898. It was heralded by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Board of Trade as a great boon. He did not consider it to be a boon in any great degree at all. It had caused the keeping of voluminous Parliamentary papers and most complex accounts; and it must be remembered that while it was distinctly stated that there was to be no accumulation beyond £100,000, they found that no less than £345,000 had been accumulated from these light dues and invested in securities. That was, he contended, a large abstraction of fruitful capital from the shipping industry. So far from being a boon, the legislation to which he had referred had been a great disadvantage. Of course he knew that Liverpool approved of it, but he was inclined to think that Liverpool sometimes took a narrow and very local view of its own interests; but the Act had been a distinct disadvantage to the East Coast, and especially to the Humber ports. It had involved the increase in the payment of dues of 100 per cent. or more in many cases. Therefore the time had come when they looked for more equality by the repeal of the system enacted in 1898, and the distribution over the whole community of the support of those lights which were essential to the safety of our commerce. What he said of Hull was equally applicable to the East Coast generally, where the ships got comparatively little use of the lights—from the Humber of almost the Spurn alone. They believed that in these matters equality meant equity. One other promise had been made in 1898 to the House, which was to be of national advantage, and that was that the shipping interest would be induced by the Act to train boys for the Royal Naval Reserve. No one who had considered the figures presented to Parliament on this matter could feel that that expectation had been in any degree fulfilled, and, in fact, the Act held out no sufficient inducement and was so far a failure, as it had been in other respects. He had a word to say on a point of detail in the Bill, in regard to which he differed from his hon. friend; although it did not go to the root of the Bill, and he should nevertheless heartily vote with his colleagues in favour of the Second Reading. He would, however, in Committee, hesitate to support the the proposals of a revolutionary character suggested as to the system of administration of the lights of this country. He did not for a moment defend the administration of the Irish lights, and he quite admitted that there was need for a considerable representative element of shipowners and merchants in the administration of the lights; but he repeated that he did not think that could ever be achieved by a mere Consultative Committee. The administrative body ought to be directly responsible. But for his own part he doubted very much whether the abolition of the Trinity House would achieve the end they all had in view. He did not object to the proposals in the Bill wholly on the ground of sentiment, though historically any ancient body like Trinity House had a claim on the consideration of the House, but he respectfully demurred to the statement of his hon. friend that the Trinity House Brethren had not the necessary practical knowledge. Now, whether regarding them as sitting as Assessors in Court, or in the administration of the lights, generally speaking, the charges made against them had not been proved. There might have been sometimes excessive expenditure, but that could be, and had been checked.

MR. McARTHUR: By whom?

*SIR ALBERT ROLLIT: By the Consultative Committee. He admitted that the action of that Committee, as stated by the hon. Mr. Burns, had achieved some reduction in expenditure; but he insisted that all the objects sought to be attained could be accomplished by the fusion of the mercantile trading and shipping interests with Trinity House. In regard to the Trinity House at Hull the Elder Brethren were not open to the charge of excessive expenditure. The whole community in that city recognised that the duties of these Elder Brethren as Master Mariners had been performed with skill and economy, and with great local knowledge and judgment, by able and experienced retired Master Mariners; and he claimed for that Trinity House that it had not only the best, but the only great, nautical school in the country for the Mercantile Marine. That school sent out Master Mariners of the highest skill, ability, and character; and knowing the manner in which the Elder Brethren of the Trinity House at Hull had performed their duties, he held that it would be a great loss to the Humber and district if their local knowledge, experience and skill were removed as a part of the system of administration of the lights. At the same time, he admitted that that was a subject for consideration in Committee, and not now. The principle of the Bill was sound; it put the burden on the right shoulders, secured a more representative character on the administrative authorities, and took care that the expenditure was reduced to a proper point. He thought all these checks would be most advantageous, and he hoped that this reform would be assisted by the Government. If it had to be delayed in coming into operation, there were accumulated funds amounting to £345,000 which might be utilised in modifying the consequences of that delay, and in expediting the abolition of the light dues. He appealed to the Government to render its help in support of the Bill, not only in the interest of the shipping industry but in that of the general community.

MR. ROBSON (South Shields) said that the hon. Gentleman who moved the Second Reading of the Bill spoke as one representing his own interests.

MR. C. MCARTHUR: I am not a shipowner.

MR. ROBSON said it would have been a misfortune if a debate of this character had not been initiated by those who were interested in the shipping business. But there was a broader point of view. This was a trade tax; and, as such, should be approached from the point of view of the general trade of the country. He proposed to deal with the question from that point of view; and that only. It was a trade tax, and not merely a trade tax, but was a kind of trade tax that was peculiarly mischievous, even among trade taxes. It was a tax on transport. It was suggested by the hon. Gentleman who moved the Second Reading that the tax was not one easy to transfer to the general community. That might be, but he did not know that that was much excuse. Either the tax was one which remained where it was first placed, on the shipowning industry, or it was transferred, by means of an increase of rates, to the community at large. In either alternative it was a bad tax. It was not fair or just that any deferential tax should be laid upon this particular industry, which would place it at a disadvantage in competing with foreign shipowners; it was not less mischievous that this industry should transfer the tax to those on whose behalf they carried goods. There they got the peculiar vice of a transport tax. What was a tax on transport? It was not merely a tax on shipping, it was a tax on everything the ship carried, that was, if it were transferred to those for whom the shipowners acted. In that regard it was a corn tax, a cotton tax, and an iron tax. It was a tax upon the whole trade of the country; and, more particularly, a tax on raw material. If there was one proposition in economics on which all schools of economists were agreed, it was that taxation should be so adjusted that it should not fall on the raw material of the country. Any tax which fell on British shipping was a mistake, as it meant a tax on raw material. Last session they had animated discussions as to the comparative merits or demerits of an import tax and export tax. But a tax on shipping combined all the demerits of the two. Therefore, they had to deal to-day with a tax which was vicious in principle, not merely from the point of view of the shipowners, but from the point of view of all interested in the general prosperity of the trade of the country. It would hamper trade in all manner of unexpected ways. He would mention one illustration—in itself a small matter, but good as an illustration—of the evil effects of the tax, even as far as shipping alone was concerned. A British ship desiring to collect its cargo at different ports entered a port with part cargo to finish loading, and a tax was at once laid, not on the cargo, but on the tonnage. He did not put that forward as constituting any grave burden, but only as illustrating the many mischiefs of trade taxation.

The hon. Gentleman referred to one matter which struck him as being most significant. He said that the amount paid by American ships in light dues only amounted to about £4,000 or £5,000, whereas English ships paid at American ports something like £60,000 or £70,000. That statement was striking when they heard the argument that light dues could be collected from foreigners without inflicting any burden on English trade. That was not so; because, like most attempts to tax the foreigner, it provoked retaliation, which was greater and more mischievous than the particular profit that was earned. America had to pay, for instance, between £4,000 and £5,000, and, as a result, America punished this country to the extent of £60,000 or £70,000. The legislation of America on this matter was retaliatory legislation; and in the attempt to get money out of the foreigner, this country was punished to a degree altogether out of proportion to the original profit. They had heard about reciprocity in trade; and they should seize every opportunity to get reciprocity, not by retaliation, but by concession. From the point of view, therefore, of the taxpayer, and from sound principles of taxation, he ventured to condemn this Bill. It was said that shipowners were subject to certain special burdens, but it was difficult to find any trade that was not burdened more or less specially. But the shipowners undoubtedly would have to anticipate further burdens, burdens which, as far as he was able to gather, they were not unwilling to assume. For instance, there was the compensation of seamen, on which the House of Commons had expressed its opinion. No doubt the shipowners would prefer to delay, or modify, or qualify that burden; but still they did not show any unworthy unwillingness to accept some burden in this regard. That also should be taken into consideration when the House was invited to relieve the trade of any exceptional burden which now lay upon it.

*Mr. DUKE (Plymouth) said his hon. and learned friend had been exceedingly moderate; but he did not feel so leniently towards this tax as his hon. and learned friend. The system of light dues came into existence when this country had very little shipping, when agriculture was the principal industry, and when it was thought by those who managed the affairs of the nation that the best method for providing for the lighting of the coasts was that the people who were venturesome enough to traverse the seas should pay for the privilege of doing so. Upon that footing power was given, and very often given to landowners as a privilege, to establish lighthouses and collect dues from people who went to sea. If this country were to continue to be the greatest master of commerce in the world, the present state of things ought not to be allowed to continue. Every civilised country in the world except one regarded the provision of lighthouses as a national obligation. Even at the Board of Trade they were regarded as a national obligation, though it was quite true they were managed through the medium of some ancient and picturesque corporation which the Board of Trade did not wish to improve out of existence. But it did seem a little odd that, for the sake of the maintenance of a picturesque system, they should maintain a burden which did not belong to the modern state of things. Other countries recognised this obligation as belonging to the State; and was this Parliament to declare at this time of day that it was not a national obligation, or, at any rate, if it were a national obligation that the State ought not to bear it? He should be glad to hear from the representative of the Government who would reply, whether in the view of the Government this was not a national obligation; and if it were, whether the nation bore the burden of it; and if not, whether it was proposed to transfer the burden attendant on the performance of this obligation from the shoulders of a section of the community to the Executive representing the entire community? Something had been said about the position of the shipping industry of this country at the present time. He was permitted to sit on the

Shipping Subsidies Committee, and no one who heard the evidence of shipowners before that Committee could fail to appreciate that the condition of the shipping industry was now probably as critical as it had been at any time since the Navigation Laws were abolished. It was not apparently remembered that while the Navigation Laws were in existence burdens were tolerable which might be absolutely intolerable when the advantages of the Navigation Laws were withdrawn. The conclusion which was forced on his mind was that the condition of shipping was such that unless there was wiser administration of its interests, and wiser care taken to protect it from exceptional impositions, and from foreign competition, which had been sufficient in the course of ten years to reduce its relative value and its absolute profit to a most alarming extent, in the course of the next ten years they might expect the owners of ships demanding legislation compared with which this Bill was trivial and unimportant.

When demands of this kind were made on Parliament, they had to be met. When, for example, those interested in the agricultural industry in Ireland came to this House, and demanded great subventions from the Treasury they had to be provided at whatever cost. The stress of foreign competition was beginning to break down and seriously imperil the supremacy of British shipping on the seas, and here was a case where something really ought to be done to relieve the shipping industry of a burden which was perhaps placed upon it properly in other years, but which should not now be borne by it. Yet what was the answer to this demand on the part of the Government? The answer was that this country could not afford it. It was difficult to suppose that this was a serious answer to this demand of the shipping industry if it was a reasonable and just demand. Let them consider what it amounted to. The shipowners and the traders and those who dealt in and consumed seaborne goods were alone made to bear the burden of half a million, *plus* the penalty paid in America and the disadvantages suffered by the colonies, who had dues exacted from them because of the dues which America had to pay, and yet it was said that this country could not find the means to redress that anomaly. His Majesty's Government was not so timid in other directions. Did it not exhibit John Bull in a somewhat ignominious light when he stood on his own doorstep collecting halfpence in this way, acting as his own linkman, and collecting a toll from those who wished to be lighted into his premises. The policy which dominated this question was a very curious one. The shipowners in this country paid five-sixths of the total amount of the cost of lighting the coasts of the Kingdom, and the impost could not be defended in principle. Was it not hard that when they came to the Government of the greatest and wealthiest empire in the world, they should be told we could not afford to remedy this injustice? He hoped that the Bill moved that day would, at all events, fix a period to the system. It might be that when millions had to be provided for other purposes it was not possible to provide half a million this year, but the shipowners had complained of this matter again and again, and they had still to bear the burden. Under the circumstances it might be reasonable to say that having regard to the burdens that the country had had to bear in other directions this year, this sum could not be paid out of the exchequer, but if that were so, there was no reason why the Government should not say that it should end in two years or three, or that at any rate it should not continue beyond five years.

*SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee) thought that whatever ground of complaint there was against Trinity House and the Irish Board of Lights, there was considerably greater ground for complaint against the Commission of Lights for Scotland. The Board of Elder Brethren of Trinity House consisted of thirteen members, who had passed the greater part of their lives at sea and were well acquainted with the requirements of lighting the coasts. On the Irish Board there were two shipowners, but on the Commission of Northern Lights there was not a single nautical man. That body consisted of fourteen lawyers and a few municipal representatives whose other duties were so great that they were rarely able to attend the meetings of the Board, and the result was that the whole administration was practically in the hands of the engineering expert whose decisions became the decisions of the Board. The administration of the Trinity House was far better than that of the Commission of Northern Lights. Some five years ago a very strong representation was made by the Shipmasters' and Seamen's Association of Scotland as to the different periods of lighting and extinguishing the lights round the coast of Scotland, as compared with those of England. That representation set forth strenuous objections to putting out the lights earlier in the morning and lighting them much later in the evening than was done by the Trinity House in England, but the Commissioner of Northern Lights took no notice of that representation, except that it set forth some hypothetical reasons in support of its own antiquated code. We were always being told of Imperial interests, but even now Canada was suffering in all its coast trade in consequence of the stupid course taken by this country in this matter. The serious imposts inflicted upon them when they visited the ports of the United States and the other points which had been referred to, demanded, in his opinion, the most serious consideration of the Government.

SIR ROBERT ROPNER (Stockton) said he had hoped that the Government would have intervened before with the statement that they had made up their minds to do away with the injustice under which shipowners were suffering. It was very clear to his mind that the present lighthouse authorities had not done their duty. If no other charge could be brought against them, the charges of extravagance had been made good. What were the facts? In 1896 light dues collected from shipowners were £398,000. It was generally understood then that the amount had reached high water mark, and yet last year the amount of these dues had grown to £500,000, an increase of something like £102,000. Surely there must be leakage somewhere. There was at all events extravagance. This was the more evident when they compared the amount with that expended in other countries. The whole cost of lighting the lighthouses and buoying the coast in France was something like £50,000. A similar amount sufficed in Italy, and considerably less in Germany. If these three countries, each of which had a very long coast line, could perform this service at such a comparatively small cost, surely it was plain there was room for a very considerable reduction of the British light dues. In order that that might be effected he believed it was necessary to reconstitute the lighthouse authority. Ship owners were not wedded to the idea of making the Board of Trade that authority. They proposed it because they believed the Government were likely to favour that idea more than any other and the Board of Trade at present enjoyed the confidence of shipowners. They suggested however, that the Board of Trade should be assisted by practical shipmasters and shipowners so as to avoid extravagance; at all events it must be generally admitted that some alteration in the authority was needed and he hoped that consideration would induce the Government to allow this Bill to go to a Committee in order that the matter might be considered. In regard to the proposal to abolish the light dues he pointed out that the question had been before the country for at least a hundred years. Select Committees were appointed in 1821, 1834, 1845, and 1860 and all reported in favour of the remission of the light dues In addition they had the report of the Select Committee on Subsidies, which also recommended the abolition of the dues. Most of the witnesses examined before that Committee recommended the abolition of the light dues even though they were not in favour of subsidies. He thought that fact ought to have great weight with the House. A Royal Commission sat in 1861 which also approved of the abolition of these dues. It was true the Departmental Committee did not report in favour of the abolition of the light dues, but that was because the Government obtained an understanding that the Committee need not make a recommendation in that direction before it was appointed. It was frequently said that it was only right that the people who benefited by the lights should pay the dues. It was not a fact now that the users of the light paid the dues. It was true that the ships which entered and cleared from our ports paid dues but the coast lights of the British isles were used by vessels of all nations not proceeding to our ports at all, and therefore, contributing nothing in the shape of dues. The largest users of the lights in this country, the Navy, again paid nothing in the way of light dues. Surely it was not fair that shipowners whose vessels use the home ports should be made to pay the whole cost of maintaining the coast lights.

It could not be gainsaid that the foreigner helped to pay these dues, but surely the fact that they were getting money out of foreign nations was no reason for perpetuating an injustice to our own people. Moreover, if they dealt fairly to the ships of foreign nations in this respect, they would be able to claim from foreign nations that their vessels coming to our ports should be made to comply with the regulations of our Board of Trade, and so placed on an equal footing with our own ships. For that reason he thought the country need not regret the loss of £150,000 a year—which, after all, would not be a loss, because whatever amount was derived from foreign shipowners under these light dues was more than counterbalanced by exactions from our shipowners in foreign ports. The United States compelled the payment of tonnage dues on all ships coming to her ports, but those dues were lessened in proportion to the degree in which American vessels were released from dues in other countries. Because in England, American ships were made to pay light dues, therefore English ships in American ports were subject to tonnage dues which were intended to counterbalance the disadvantage on American ships. That might be fair if the shipping of the two nations were equal, but inasmuch as twenty British ships entered American ports for every one entering our ports from the United States, we paid twenty times as much as we were able to exact. Although some foreign countries charged tonnage dues which might in part cover the cost of lighting, other countries such as Holland and Belgium did not charge any tonnage dues, and he strongly supported the idea that no light dues should be charged on shipping. Answering a statement issued by Trinity House to the Committee on Subsidies, he said he had already shown that the charge did not fall upon those whose property was protected. The charge did not fall upon freight, because freights were not affected by the charges. For example, a vessel loading in New York for Bordeaux would get exactly the same freight as one trading for England. The fact that England charged light dues and France did not, would not affect the freights at all. It was stated that the charge was a small one, but small or large, he could only say the shipping trade to-day was in so bad a condition that even the smallest charge was of the greatest importance, seeing that vessels did not pay their expenses, let alone paying for deterioration or interest on capital. This statement pointed out that the charges under the system which came into force in 1899 were much lower than before, what did that prove? That far more was charged to the shipowners than was absolutely necessary, and as a consequence money was expended in extravagance. The fact remained that £345,000 had been accumulated, and he was afraid unless something was done extravagance would be continued. He believed the cost of the light could be reduced exactly one half, and he could not help thinking that the Government, when it appreciated the position, would meet the requests for relief, and if they could not give them relief this year they would hold out hopes that it would be given next year.

*MR. MACONOCHIE (Aberdeenshire, E.) thought that Parliament should do all it could to assist the shipping industry, because shipowners were now faced with competition such as they had never had to contend with before, and had a great deal to do to maintain their position in the shipping world. Speaking from his experience of a small port in the north of Scotland twenty years ago, nine-tenths of the traffic in that port was carried in British vessels, whereas the present proportion was only one-tenth. All the governments in the civilised world were doing their utmost to maintain and develop their shipping; and the British Government, if it were wise, would speedily step in and relieve British shipowners. They all believed in the Plimsoll mark, but there was no doubt that it had done British shipping much harm by enabling foreigners to carry much larger freights, and consequently to charge lower prices. That, however—at which they did not grumble much—was only one of the many anomalies with which they had to contend. But the British shipowner, if he came to Parliament and asked—rightly, as he thought—to be considered, ought also to consider the British manufacturer, and see that he was not placed in a worse position than the foreign manufacturer. To give a concrete case, some years ago in the course of business he had to send a quantity of goods to Beira. The London manufacturer had to pay 45s. per ton, whereas the German manufacturer, by arrangement with the shipowners in London, was allowed to ship his goods on a through Bill of Lading from London, *viâ* Hamburg, to Beira for 30s. per ton. These things would have to be considered if the Government were to make concessions, which he agreed were perfectly right and proper, to the shipping community.

MR. HARRIS (Tynemouth) said the fact that this Bill came before the House backed by the opinion of the whole shipping community of the country was a strong argument in favour of it receiving the support of the Board of Trade. He thought the most important proposal in the measure was the one with reference to moving the control of lighthouses, beacons, and buoys from the present authorities and vesting it in the Board of Trade. That proposal indicated something more than a mere wayward change. An authority directly represented in the House of Commons was desired, and those most concerned wished that authority to be the body which at present had the legislative control of the shipping industry. Trinity House, as it was now called, was not founded by Henry VIII. for the purpose of looking after the lights at all, but to direct the naval dockyards, ransom vessels which were seized, and "to improve the breed of seamen." Later on they obtained permission to erect beacons on the coasts, but it was not until 1836 that they secured the administrative control of the lights and the collection of light dues. Shipowners not only asked that the control should be changed, but asserted that it had been exercised extravagantly and inefficiently, and they thought the time had come when the Government should grant their request. The incidence of this tax should be removed from the shoulders of the shipowners and placed on the general community by being paid out of the Imperial Exchequer. Toll-gates had been abolished as far as inland traffic was concerned, but the principle remained in regard to sea traffic, with the strange anomaly that, of all the people who used the lights only those who brought commerce and trade to these shores were taxed, while those who benefited foreign countries were charged no dues at all. It would possibly be argued that the charge of £500,000 a year was a comparatively small sum, and that the shipowners were a rich community, and well able to pay it. That might be true in a way, but it was not the amount so much as the principle of which they complained. They did not come to the House *in forma pauperis* to ask a favour; they were entitled in equity and justice to have this grievance removed. The tax did not affect shipping alone, because shipowners in calculating the prices at which they could profitably carry the goods of merchants took the tax into consideration. Its incidence fell very heavily on some classes of material imported. The total amount worked out at about 2s. per cent. on the whole of the imports into this country. As the tax was levied on tonnage it worked out at less on materials of high value, but on raw materials of low value it amounted in some cases to nearly 1 per cent., which, owing to wastage and so on, represented a considerably higher percentage on the manufactured, refined, or marketable article. As representing a large shipping constituency, he cordially supported the Second Reading of the Bill, and hoped the Government would enable the measure to pass, so that the administration of the lights might be improved, and this unjust taxation fall not on the shipping industry alone but on the community at large.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith Burghs) thought the Government must admit that a strong case had been made out for the Bill. The arguments divided themselves into two categories—those advocating administrative change and those in favour of relieving the financial burdens on the shipping industry. As far as he could see, the only argument against the financial proposal was that, in view of the state of the finances of the country and the calls upon the National Exchequer, the present was not a convenient season at which to make the demand, and he thought the hon. Member for Plymouth did not go too far when he suggested a period of five years for making such a change as that involved in the Bill. Although some rather painful accounts had been given of the position of the shipping industry, there were signs, on the other hand, that it was not in so struggling a condition as it had been in the past. He would not, therefore, associate himself with those who urged an immediate financial change, although he agreed that a strong case had been made out for relief. He did not think the Northern Lights Commissioners could be regarded as an effective body, judging from the way their work had been done. Most of the work done by them had been done extravagantly. When an engineer was in effective control he was apt to become extravagant, and look upon a construction as a memorial to his own talent. He thought these different bodies had been very extravagant, and any one who had seen the system in Denmark, where the lights, life saving appliances, and information provided for the fisheries were all under one control, could not help being struck with the efficiency and economy with which those services were conducted. He thought it might have been more expedient to have begun a reform with the Scottish and Irish Lights Commissioners, although he thought to secure efficiency and economy this Bill was asking none too much. He thought this measure had been introduced by the mover with admirable fairness, and he was sure that the time was not far distant when a radical reform in these matters would be carried through.

Mr. HOULT (Cheshire, Wirrall) said it must have been rather astonishing to those who had been previously associated with this question to find such practical unanimity on both sides of the House with regard to the Second Reading of this Bill. Hitherto this subject had been regarded as purely one for shipowners. A great change had taken place in feeling in that House and also in the country, because it was now recognised that it was not a matter of shipowners only, but a matter which deeply affected the shipping industry which was of the greatest importance to the country. Traders now recognised that the effect of anything which was to the detriment of the shipping industry was detrimental to trade, hence they found traders now in this House supporting what was an advantage to the shipping industry. He did not propose for one moment to occupy the time of the House by saying anything with regard to the injustice of this charge and the extravagance of the Boards who administered the duties of lighting our coasts, because that already had been most effectively dealt with by previous speakers. But he would wish to say a word with reference to the financial aspect of the question, and he could not but feel some sympathy for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because the right hon. Gentleman was looked to by the country to initiate some very considerable reduction in taxation, which the country had had to meet in consequence of the war which had just ended. It was natural that the country should expect a very considerable reduction in taxation, and he for one would not blame the Chancellor of the Exchequer for getting his hands on every penny he could for the purpose of reducing that taxation. But it had been held out by the promoters of this Bill that the operation of it could be deferred, and that relieved the position as regarded the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was rather inclined to fancy that, serious as taxation was at present, and desirous as the people of this country were that some reduction should be made in taxation, if this question was thoroughly understood by the people they would not hesitate to consent to the additional taxation, or rather to forego the remission of taxation which might be necessary, in order to deal with this Bill. For evidence of that one could only refer to the large Votes that were constantly made by this House in favour of the Navy. Why were those Votes made? They were made to prevent war, and, in the event of war, to ensure safety. The people of this country would recognise that in the event of war without a strong mercantile marine, the position of the country would be very desperate, and hence anything that would conduce to the welfare of the mercantile marine, would, he was satisfied, meet with the approval of the country.

It might be asked why should this change be made? It had hitherto been borne by the shipping industry, and surely the shipping industry was still able to bear the tax, as the shipping industry had passed through depressions before. But the conditions were entirely different in previous depressions. The shipping industry had had to face competition from foreign nations possessed of shipping not capable of competing with the modern and best shipping owned by this country. Foreigners, until recently, fortunately came to this country and bought our second-hand ships, our cast-offs as it were, which we were very glad to get rid of, and in previous depressions they had had these ships to face us in competition. But the position had entirely changed. The foreigner no longer bought second-hand old ships; he had recognised, long since, that that was a mistaken policy, and he possessed in these days the very best ships that could be obtained. No one could deny that in recent years foreign countries had become possessed of ships equal to our own in point of capacity and economy, and capable of competing with the best ships we had. The conditions, therefore, were entirely different in this depression to any depression they had previously experienced, and the question arose whether, in face of that competition, our shipping industry could still maintain its own. In his judgment that was somewhat doubtful. There was no doubt, for instance, that the Norwegians, the Germans, and the Spaniards could sail their ships cheaper than we could sail ours, and with regard to France, the bounty given by the French Government to their sailing ships would undoubtedly wipe out the sailing ships belonging to this country. Trade would gravitate to the place where conditions were most favourable. The increase in foreign tonnage might be insensible at first, but gradually it would increase, and he was perfectly satisfied that there was now no room whatever for any taxation on the shipping industry of this country. The shipowners, in prosecuting their trade, required to be placed on the very best terms it is possible for them to be placed. They must not be handicapped in any way if they were to succeed. In their competition with foreign countries they must be placed on terms certainly not less favourable, and even with the abolition of light dues, he was afraid that British shipowners might have very great difficulty in holding their own against foreign competition. Certainly the time had arrived when the Government of this country should give very close and earnest consideration to these subjects. From the unanimity which had been expressed on both sides of the House to-day, it was obvious that there was an overwhelming feeling in favour of this Bill. He thought he might say without the slightest hesitation that the Members of the House were simply representing the feelings of their constituents. He hoped they should have a reply from the President of the Board of Trade, or the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which would prove satisfactory to the shipping industry and at the same time to the country.

*MR. EVELYN CECIL (Aston Manor) said the Bill had been introduced in an exhaustive speech by the hon Member for the Exchange Division of Liverpool, and nine other speeches had followed. In not one of these speeches had any hon. Member opposed the measure. It seemed to him that that indicated the overwhelming feeling of the House, which could not be gainsaid. His only regret was that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was going to answer on behalf of the Government, was not present earlier to hear the extremely strong and detailed arguments which had been urged in favour of the Bill. There was a wide consensus of opinion, apart from the shipping interest, in favour of the measure. He himself had no connection with the shipping interest except in so far as he presided over the Subsidies Committee. It was on the broad principle that he supported the Bill, and that principle was that what was a national advantage should be a national undertaking. The municipalities which lighted the streets did not charge every cab and every foot passenger a tax for keeping up the lights. It was still more the duty of the Government to make the lighting of our coasts a national charge, because it was for the benefit of the whole nation. There were numerous witnesses before the Subsidies Committee unconnected with the shipping interest who advocated this alteration. Amongst the witnesses were Sir Robert Giffen, and Sir Spencer Walpole, both of whom were emphatically in favour of the abolition of light dues as now charged. The hon. Member for Great Yarmouth, a high authority on naval and shipping matters, and the hon. Member for West Wolverhampton, who was not in any way connected with the shipping interest, were also entirely in favour of abolition of these dues, and the instances might be multiplied. He did not hesitate to say that the vast majority of the opinion of this country which had paid the slightest attention to this question was in favour of the passing of the Bill. His Majesty's ships were not charged light dues, and considering the pride we properly felt in our Navy it did seem mean that the shipowners should be called upon to pay for the lighting of the coasts on which the safety of His Majesty's ships depended. He was told that the Board of Trade disapproved of the Subsidies Committee having made any recommendation on the subject as being beyond their reference. The Committee were obliged to take cognisance of various matters connected with the shipping trade, because they desired to see how far there were contributory causes in addition to foreign subsidies affecting the trade. It was perfectly obvious to every member of the Committee that the witnesses were of opinion light dues should be abolished.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): You did not take evidence upon it

*MR. EVELYN CECIL: On the contrary, we took a great deal of evidence, including that of an official of the Board of Trade,

*MR. RITCHIE: Was he in favour of it?

*MR. EVELYN CECIL: He carefully guarded himself by saying that the Board of Trade did not desire to express any opinion. Further, the conclusions of the Committee were not stated in the form of recommendations, but of opinions, which were summarised at the end of the Report. It seemed to him that it was really scouting common sense to suggest that, in spite of the exhaustive inquiry that had been held for two years, and of the public interest in the subject, they ought not to have made any report or even expressed any opinion on the matter. The Chancellor of the Exchequer would probably tell them in his reply that the Government had no money. That was the answer which was commonly given by Chancellors of the Exchequer when a private Bill involved the expenditure of money. In this case he did not believe that the Bill would impose a charge of half a million on the National Exchequer. Experts had told him that £250,000 would be sufficient for the purpose. It had been stated that France only expended £50,000 or £60,000 on coast lighting. Although he did not pretend to vouch for that figure, it did seem to him that £500,000 was an excessive amount of charge on the National Exchequer. When they remembered that the Government was perfectly prepared to spend £34,000,000 on the Army they might have some consideration for the shipping trade, which was so important to the national interest, by providing so comparatively small a sum. If the principle was sound that a national advantage should be paid for by the National Treasury, the Government might assent to the principle of the Bill, and then insert a clause, if they thought it necessary, that the measure should not come into operation for two years, so as to avoid throwing an immediate charge on the Treasury. A matter which was closely connected with this subject was the fact that the amount of light dues collected was considerably in excess of the actual cost of maintaining the lights. It seemed to him that that was rather a slim piece of public economy, and he did not think that it was quite worthy of such a nation as ours. He understood that in the year ending March 31, 1902, £30,194 more than was required for covering the cost of lighting the coasts was collected in light dues from the shipowners. That amount was included in the balance of £345,972, which was lying at the credit of the General Lighthouse Fund a year ago.

He did not think he need dilate much upon the composition of the proposed new authority. It was suggested that shippers should have a voice in the matter, and that their advice would often be useful, but that could be considered by the Committee, and he did not suppose that his hon. friend would have any objection—as they made the offer of their services voluntarily—to striking out that portion of the Bill if the Board of Trade objected to it. What, he asked, was the practice of foreign countries in these matters? Great Britain and Turkey were the only nations that charged light dues upon the mercantile marine; all other nations made it a national charge. It was also pointed out that the United States put a tonnage tax of 6 cents a ton on our shipping which cost us from £60,000 to £80,000 a year, whereas we only obtained from United States shipping a sum of £5,000 for light dues. It might be said that even if we took off these light dues on United States ships, the United States would decline to take off their tonnage tax. That was a possibility which they should have to bear in mind, and it might be desirable to adopt a cautious policy in that respect. If the United States, or any other foreign nation, was not disposed to give and take in the matter, we might still excuse British ships from paying the light dues, and yet put a tonnage tax on foreign ships—not as a retaliation, but as a basis of negotiation. The Board of Trade had, he knew, been often abused for its general policy in connection with shipping and other matters. He thought that the language used in some pamphlets issued by those who were in favour of the Bill had been sometimes extravagant; and there was a disposition at times to make use of arguments and *ex parte* statements which were not wholly convincing. He felt some sympathy for the position of the Board of Trade, which had always to occupy a critical attitude. The normal position of the Board of Trade was largely one of supervision of the shipping interests, and interested people naturally said that the restraints which the Board required to be placed on shipping were restraints on our national trade. He thought that criticism of the Board of Trade was sometimes carried to excess, but at the same time he could not help admitting that the Board by its actions sometimes justified their reputation, and he was convinced that his right hon. friend would do much to belie that reputation if he were to pass this Bill. The measure might need some amendment, but the principle of it ought to be admitted. That it was admitted by the vast majority of those present was a matter which could not be doubted. He could only hope that after the strong views which had been expressed in the House the Government would gratify a wide-spread national feeling by supporting the Second Reading of the Bill.

*MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland) said that in a matter of this kind the general public had to be considered as well as the shipowners. There would be a greater amount of sympathy for the shipowners if they showed greater interest in the national welfare by employing more British seamen and fewer foreigners on their ships and by not bringing down the wages of the sailors. But his main objection to the Bill was that it made an attack on the Northern Lights Commissioners of Scotland, and he presumed also on the Lights Commissioners of Ireland and England. He dissented entirely from the view expressed as to the Northern Lights Commissioners, and that a Board with a majority of shipowners would be preferable. The very worst representatives they could have on any Board were experts, who got into the way of predominating the other members of the Board. In Scotland there were on the Board legal representatives who were able to sift all the evidence brought before them, and were not liable to be overwhelmed by expert opinion, but took that opinion for what it was worth. He objected to the principle of the Bill in throwing the whole administration of the lights on the Board of Trade. He believed in decentralising administration, and that the Board of Trade was already far too heavily overweighted, and had more to do than it could stagger under. The Board of Northern Lights was composed of gentlemen of position, and if they had not given entire satisfaction they had done their very utmost in accordance with the means they had at their disposal. If the hon. Gentlemen who supported the Bill would endeavour to improve the constitution of that Board, and also that of the Irish Board, they would have the sympathy of the House; but the shipowners were not the only persons to be consulted; there was the general public. He was sure that such a Board as they had in Scotland was far more likely to do justice to the entire community than the hon. Gentleman who had addressed the House that afternoon. There was a point to which he wished to direct the attention of the President of the Board of Trade. He was credibly informed that engineers of the highest capacity were not employed, and that instead of these men being paid a fixed and proper salary according to the services they rendered, they were paid by commission on the amount collected. That was a very objectionable practice. He respectfully submitted that it was the duty of the President of the Board of Trade to put an end to this system of secret commission, and to place the position of the engineers and their salaries on a proper and business-like footing. There was one other point to which he wished to direct attention, and that was the inefficient lighting on many portions of our coasts. Much had been done to improve the lighting by the Scottish and the Irish Boards; but in many places the only lighting was by hoisting a ship's lantern on the top of a high pole. The lanterns were lit only at the convenience of the persons in charge, and the system was dangerous in outlying ports, and might be much worse than if there was no light at all. There was a cheap and efficient system of lighting on the coasts of Norway and Sweden. The cost of that system was something like 100 per cent. less than the system in this country, and it afforded an excellent light which burned a whole week on end and assured a great deal more safety than the system which had been adopted of cheap lights here.

MR. CORBETT (Down, N.) said he noticed that there were very few of his colleagues present that day; but as an Irish Member he gave this Bill his most hearty and cordial support. He believed that, for once, he was speaking on behalf of all his Irish colleagues in so doing. He was not a shipowner, and had not a single share in any shipping concern; but he gave the Bill his support because it established an authority subject to public opinion and Parliamentary control instead of the obsolete Irish Lights Commissioners. No one in or out of Ireland knew how these Commissioners were appointed, but one thing they did know was that they were absolutely deaf to all appeals. Ever since he had entered the House he had tried by all the means in his power to call attention to the lighthouse at the entrance to Strangford Lough. That lighthouse was built many years ago, but it had never been lighted up yet. All kinds of public pressure had been brought in vain to bear on the Irish Lights Commissioners to have the lighthouse lighted. Resolutions had been passed by County Councils and every kind of public opinion had been brought to bear upon them, but the answer had always been that the Board of Trade had no kind of control over the Irish Lights Commissioners and that nothing could be done. It seemed that these Irish Lights Commissioners were a body of fossilised old gentlemen in Dublin who had no knowledge, and no desire to acquire the knowledge, of the responsibility of a body which undertook the duty of lighting the Irish coasts. He would give his vote in favour of a new authority subject to the control of Parliament, and of public opinion.

SIR CHARLES RENSHAW (Renfrew, W.) said he was sorry to oppose this Bill, but he could not forget that there was a large body throughout the country who were taxpayers, and he ventured to say that this question, no doubt one of very great importance, had come before the House at a singularly unfortunate time when large demands were being made on the public purse. A Party was springing up in the House which had, if he understood their action, for their object the promotion of economy in national expenditure. He was astonished that those Gentlemen were conspicuous by their absence that day. This was a matter in which the great body of British taxpayers were concerned, and they had a right to be heard. As he understood the question, the proposal was to transfer from the shipowners of this and foreign countries a payment of something like £500,000 on to the shoulders of the British taxpayers. So far as the amount paid by foreign shipping was concerned, he did not see that the loss was in any way to be made up, nor was there any assurance that the public would be compensated by a reduction in British freights. Were existing rates to be maintained, and was this saving at the expense of the national purse to pass into the hands of the wealthy shipowning class? The hon. Member for the Aston Division said that His Majesty's ships did not pay light dues, and that it was wrong that the charge for lighting the coasts should be paid by the Mercantile Marine while His Majesty's Navy escaped. But the expense for the Navy was largely incurred for the protection of mercantile shipping, and where would the Mercantile Marine be but for the freedom with which they were allowed to pursue their trade with the assistance of the protection of His Majesty's ships? The hon. Member for the Aston Division said that a national advantage ought to be paid for out of the National Exchequer. That argument could be carried a great deal further than in regard to the payment of the cost of lighting the coasts. An analogous case to this would be, upon the arguments supporting it, that railway companies should have their lines and stations, which were for the public advantage, lighted free at the national expense. If the claim advanced by the hon. Member for the Aston Division were pressed, many other interests would have an equal right to ask for similar assistance. For his part he believed that this was an inopportune time to make a new and large claim on the public Exchequer. What was wanted at the present time was economy in national expenditure and a reduction in taxation, and this was not the time for relieving a particular interest from an obligation which was an element in the fixing of rates of freight.

Mr. JOYCE (Limerick) said he intended to support the Second Reading of the Bill, although he did not agree with all its provisions. As one who had something to do with ships and shipping, he thought that the charge for supporting the lighthouses should be a national charge, and should not be borne by any particular section of the community. It was a national charge in all other maritime nations; and he did not understand why this country, which presumed to be the leader in everything connected with maritime affairs, should be behind other nations in this matter. He merely wished to enter his protest with reference to the *personnel* of the Irish Lights Commissioners. He would mention one fact in connection with that Board. He was connected with the harbour authority in his native city; and some years ago they endeavoured to get the Board to put an additional light on the river, where it was much needed. They appealed again and again, but they did not get the slightest satisfaction. There was no satisfaction to be got, even in this House, with regard to the Board, because when a question was put regarding it, the President of the Board of Trade simply said that he was powerless in the matter. The Board ran the machine as they thought fit. They elected their own members when vacancies occurred; and the great ports of Belfast, Cork, Limerick, Londonderry, Galway, and Waterford were not represented, though they had tried to get representation on the Board. If only for the reason that the Bill would put an end to such an obsolete Board, he would support the Second Reading. There were, however, portions of the Bill which should not be pressed too strongly in the Committee, and which could be eliminated with safety and justice. Shipowners claimed the right of representation on these Boards, but if the cost of maintaining the lighthouses became a national charge, shipowners would not have any special claim to representation. The Bill deserved great consideration at the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Board of Trade; and he hoped that the reply of the Government would be favourable

*Mr. RENWICK (Newcastle-on-Tyne) said that the hon. Member for West Renfrew objected not only to the principle, but also to the details of the measure, although every Member who had hitherto spoken in the debate had expressed himself in favour of the principle, a few criticisms only being advanced with regard to the details. Having debated the Bill at such length it was about time that they had some expression of opinion regarding it from the Government; and he hoped that His Majesty's Ministers would not keep the House waiting longer for an expression of their intentions

He ventured to think that the hon. Member for West Renfrew had not listened to all the speeches which were delivered in favour of the Bill. If the hon. Gentleman had, he thought he would not have given expression to such remarks as he had. The hon. Gentleman referred to certain Members in recent debates being in favour of economy in connection with the Army, and that they were now asking for further expenditure to be thrown on the taxpayer. He was one who had raised his voice in this House in favour of economy in the Army; but he was equally prepared to advocate that the cost of light dues should be thrown on the taxpayer. As a shipowner he asked for that, not as a favour, but as a right. As a shipowner he wanted no grant or subsidy, and no dole; he simply wanted the State to pay the cost of lighting the coast the same as other nations did.

The hon. Member for West Renfrew said that if the State were to be asked to bear the expense of lighting the coast, why should not railway companies also ask the State to bear the expense of lighting their systems. Railway companies took very good care not to allow another company to use their lines without payment. A railway company having running powers over another company's lines had to pay for the advantage. But all nations had running powers round the coast of this country, they used the lights, and therefore they were entitled to ask that shipowners ought not to be the only people who had to bear the cost. Let the House suppose that this country had not the shipping trade they had at the present time, and that they had not so many ships. The duty would still lie upon the nation to light the coast, and would it be fair to call on the few shipowners who would be available, in those circumstances, to bear this enormous cost? He ventured to think not. He thought the Foreign Office was perfectly well aware of the outcry there was when loss of life and of property occurred when ships were wrecked off some out-of-the-way place, say on the coast of Asia, where there were no lights, a similar outcry would arise if our coasts were left unlighted. When he stood on the coast at Folkestone, and saw the British lights on the one side, and the magnificent French lights on the other, and saw ships passing up and down the Channel, he asked himself why on one side the State should bear the cost, and why on the other side the shipowners. The reason put forward as to why the State ought to undertake this duty had not been answered; and he would be interested to hear the reply His Majesty's Ministers would make. One of the objects of the Bill was to transfer the administration of light dues from Trinity House to the Board of Trade. His hon. friend said he was not in favour of that because at the present time shipowners had a consulting voice on the Trinity House Board. His experience in this House taught him that while speech might be silvern, votes were golden. So it was at Trinity House. For many years Trinity House had administered the light dues. They had gathered money from shipowners, and spent a certain portion of it; but shipowners had no voice in the spending of it. Since 1854, it was stated that they received £2,000,000 sterling more than they expended. What had been done with that money? He had heard a part of it was used for the maintenance of a school; and they were told that a large part of it was spent in giving magnificent feasts, which many hon. Members were pleased to attend, though he personally had never been at one of them. He sincerely trusted that they would hear from His Majesty's Ministers that they would allow the Bill to be read a second time, and to be sent to a Grand Committee. The Chairman of the Subsidies Committee said that they had reported in favour of the principle of the Bill; they also found that Select Committees in 1822, 1834, 1845, and 1860 had all reported in favour of what they now asked for. The fact remained that it was the duty of every civilised nation to light its own coast; and further, it was the duty of every civilised nation to take every precaution to mark, not only by lights, but by beacons and otherwise, all dangerous spots. If a further argument were required it was that His Majesty's ships did not pay light dues. The hon. Member for West Renfrew said that His Majesty's ships were protecting commerce. So they were. But the shipowners were not asked to pay a larger proportion to the cost of the Navy than any other section of the community; and why should they be asked to pay the whole cost of lighting the coast? Yachts and pleasure boats, which no doubt many hon. Members used, paid very little. The fishermen's small boats paid nothing, and large trawlers only paid a small sum. For all the reasons he had mentioned, he appealed to the House to vote for this Bill. They asked it not as a favour, but as a right; and he was not very particular whether they got it this year or next year, as, notwithstanding the depression in trade, they might be able to get over another year under present conditions. He hoped the House would pass the Bill by an overwhelming majority.

* Sir J. STIRLING-MAXWELL (Glasgow, College) said he was not a shipowner, and was not in the fortunate position of being even indirectly interested in the great shipping industry. There was one part of the case advanced in favour of the Bill which seemed to him to be good; and that was the complaint that the Navy did not bear any of the cost of lighting the coast. He should be glad if some arrangement could be made by which the Admiralty would contribute to the cost of lighting the coast. When, however, they were asked at a time such as this, when expenditure was constantly increasing, and when considerable bodies of opinion, to which he did not belong, were in favour of cutting down even what seemed to be the essential expenditure of the country, he did not think that it was time they should be asked to give a very large gift to an industry which appeared to be prosperous and successful. The argument was advanced that a similar charge was borne by the State in foreign countries; but he understood that in foreign countries the shipping interests had very considerable subsidies of other kinds, and the provision of lighting the coast must be regarded as one of them. He could conceive that in this country the shipping industry might require a subsidy also; and, in certain circumstances, it might be to the interests of the country to give it; but let it be given in £. s. d. and not given indirectly. The debate had been mainly on one side, because Members who were not interested in shipping did not attend. He hoped the Government would give a determined negative to the proposal.

* The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Ritchie, Croydon) said that an observation had been made by more than one speaker, who had spoken in support of this Bill, to the effect that there was an overwhelming body of opinion in the House in favour of its proposals. When he looked round the House a short time ago, at the time those observations were made, he saw how thin the attendance was, and how familiar the faces were to him as being connected with the shipping trade, either as shipowners, or as representatives of shipping ports; and he was not therefore surprised that there was an overwhelming opinion in the House in favour of the Bill. There was one incident which usually occurred on a Friday. Hon. Members who are interested in a proposal which was being put before the House of Commons were much more likely to attend to support it than other hon. Members who are not interested; and the consequence was that, as a rule, a very considerable body of opinion in the House of Commons was expressed in favour of that particular proposal. He was bound to say that there was a great deal that was attractive in the proposals of the Bill. It was always attractive to those interested in a particular industry to endeavour to shift a burden from their own shoulders on to the shoulders of others; and all interested in the trade are very ready to come forward and support such a proposal. A great deal had been said about bad trade, and about shipowners passing through a period of depression. That was true; but surely it must be within the recollection of the House that that was a mere incident of a year, or, at most, a year and a half. Nobody would deny that previously shipowners enjoyed a period of overwhelming prosperity. The moment there was a slight turn—and it was as inevitable as that the night followed the day that a period of depression would follow a period of prosperity—they asked the House of Commons to relieve them from a burden under which they had been carrying on their trade as long as British shipping had existed. The Bill was composed of two parts, although from the Memorandum distri-

buted in favour of it one would imagine that the main proposal of the Bill was for administrative changes. It was true that at the end of the Memorandum it was stated that the charges connected with the carrying out of this measure were proposed to be put upon the Treasury. The real object of the Bill was not so much administrative changes, however much they might be desired, as the transfer of the cost of lighting the coast from the shoulders of the shipowners to the shoulders of the British taxpayer. He would, however, say a word upon the proposal with regard to administrative changes. As the House was aware, there were three bodies, apart from the Board of Trade, charged with the administration of the lights around the coast. One was Trinity House, which had supervision over the other authorities, which were the Northern Lights Board and the Irish Lights Board. He protested against what had been said with regard to the manner in which Trinity House expended its funds. It had been suggested that banquets were held out of the money provided by the shipowners. He ought not to allow an observation of that kind to be made without giving it the most flat contradiction. He did not believe any board, however constituted, could administer the funds placed at their disposal more beneficially for the interests concerned, and more equitably, than the Trinity House Board. The Board was composed entirely of men who thoroughly understood the work they had to do, and whatever might be the opinion of the shipowners with regard to the incidence of the cost, they would, he was sure, acknowledge that the Board performed their work in the most admirable manner, and that the lighting of the coasts was done, so far as the funds at the disposal of the Board permitted, in an efficient manner.

His hon. friend the Member for Aston Manor said that he had it on good authority that, instead of costing the large sums that were now spent in lighting the coast, the work might be carried out for £250,000 or £300,000. His hon. friend did not give the name of that expert, but he himself suspected that he was a shipowner; and he was not at all sure that a shipowner was sufficiently qualified to express an opinion on this subject which was worthy of any weight. It was ridiculous to say that the coast of this country could be lighted for any lesser sum than was now spent. If any charge could fairly be made with regard to the lighting of the coast, it would be that not enough money was spent on it. His hon. friend also said that the cost of lighting the French coast was not so great. That was so; but why? Because the French coast was not so great; and, moreover, a large number of lightships were necessary around the coast in this country which were not employed off the coast of France. The mere assertion as to what might be done if the body were changed might really be put aside by the House when considering this question. Something was said about the Northern Lights Board. It might very well be that it was advisable to make some change in the constitution of that Board, and add to it representatives of bodies now not represented on it. But, speaking with some experience of the work of that Board, which he had had more than one opportunity of judging when he was at the Board of Trade, he ventured to say that they always did their work in a most admirable manner. The Northern Lights Commissioners, although no doubt mostly legal, were men of affairs who took an immense amount of trouble to see that their work was properly done. He believed that there were complaints with reference to certain parts of the coast which it was thought might be better lighted; but yet, for the amount of money they had to spend no other body could be more economical. With regard to the Irish Lights Board, he confessed that when he was at the Board of Trade he did hear, more than once, a complaint about the constitution of that Board; he was sure no one would be more willing than his right hon. friend the President of the Board of Trade to admit that it was quite possible that there might well be some change in the constitution of the Board; and that with reference to both the Scottish and Irish Boards an addition of representatives of outside bodies to their numbers might very well be considered.

It should be remembered that a Committee sat and reported in 1896 on this question. It had a most competent chairman, Mr. Courtney, who was at one time a Member of this House, and included several shipowners. They advised certain changes of a very important character. Those changes had been carried out by a Bill which he passed when he was President of the Board of Trade. Every recommendation of that Committee was now law; and one of its recommendations was that the Board of Trade should associate with itself an Advisory Committee in connection with all new works for lighting the coast. That Advisory Committee had been in existence now for several years, and he believed did extremely good work. Whether it had any material effect either on administration or expenditure, one thing was certain—that it brought together a number of men who thoroughly understood the trade of which they were members. Something had been said with regard to contributions from the Navy. That matter was referred to in the Report of the Committee, and although some of the largest shipowners in the country were on that Committee they made an unanimous recommendation that, having regard to the services rendered by the Navy to the mercantile marine, they could not recommend any change in the existing state of things. In their opinion no contribution from the Navy was desirable, having regard to the efficient protection which the Navy gave to the mercantile marine. Therefore, if no contribution were laid on the Navy for the lighting of the coast, it was mainly because in considering this matter the Committee, composed as it was very largely of men interested in shipping, recommended that there was no necessity for any contribution from the Navy. The real reason why this Bill was being promoted was not so much because of a desire for any administrative changes as to obtain the transfer of the cost of lighting the coast from the shipowners to the already overburdened taxpayer. It seemed to be assumed that it was the poor shipowner who had to pay the cost. He denied that. The shipowner did not pay the light dues any more than he paid for local lights or dock dues, or any other charges. All these things were matters which were taken into account by the shipowner when he was reckoning up his charges; and to say that the shipowner paid was contrary to the Report of the Committee over which Mr. Courtney presided. All these charges were taken into account by the shipowner when he reckoned up the costs of the ship, and when the shipowners came here and asked to be relieved of this burden, and stated that they were the people who paid, they asserted what in his opinion was contrary to the fact. This was a tax on the trade carried on by their ships, but it did not at all follow that, if the House of Commons resolved to take this burden off the shipowners and put it on to the Imperial Exchequer, the shippers of goods would gain the advantage. In the course of time, no doubt, those who made use of the ships would derive a benefit; but for some considerable period the money which was contributed by the Exchequer would undoubtedly go into the pockets of the shipowners themselves. So that the House of Commons should remember that, if they passed this Bill, what they would do would be to transfer from the shipping industry to the taxpayer the cost which the shipowner now paid for carrying on his trade.

One of the reasons given in support of this change was that, so long as these dues were collected, the United States would retaliate by charging dues on British vessels. He confessed that when he first heard that argument he thought there was a good deal of force in it, but he was now convinced that there was no strength in it. He was convinced that the United States would not be prevented from making these charges unless their ships were relieved not only of these light dues but of all local dues. So long as local dues were collected, even if they abolished the dues of which they were now speaking to-morrow, the United States of America would still take dues on our vessels. Therefore, to make the argument of any real effect it was essential not only that the cost of lighting our coasts, but the cost of these local dues, should be transferred from the shoulders of the shipping industry to those of the taxpayers. Unless that was done the argument, so far as it was any argument at all, fell to the ground. He had already told the House that his right hon. friend would be quite ready to listen to any suggestion that might be made with regard either to the Scotch or the Irish Lights Boards; but that was not what was really wanted by the promoters of the Bill. No doubt they would be glad to have any administrative changes that might be found necessary. But what they really wanted was the transfer of this burden from their own shoulders to the shoulders of the taxpayer; and he would ask the House of Commons whether in the existing state of taxation it was right and proper that so large a sum as £500,000 a year, £170,000 of which was paid by the foreigner, should be added to the already heavily-burdened taxpayer. He would also point out that even if this Bill were read a second time it could only amount to the expression of a pious opinion by the House. The Bill could have no effect, because, on the part of the Government, he declined absolutely to propose to the House that this change of burden should be made. The clause in the Bill which proposed this change was inoperative, as the House knew perfectly well, unless it was moved by a Minister of the Crown; and he could assure the hon. Gentlemen who supported the Bill that the last thing he intended to do was to propose additional burdens on the taxpayers. He hoped it might be his happy lot to take off burdens. That was his desire. It was not his desire, and it certainly was not his intention, to make any proposal to his colleagues which would have the effect of transferring this particular burden from the shoulders of those who now bore it to the shoulders of the taxpayers.

*COLONEL DENNY (Kilmarnock Burghs) said he was not sure that he had ever listened to a speech similar in style and in its conclusion to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman commenced by charging shipowners with making loose assertions and went on to make even looser assertions himself. The right hon. Gentleman in reply then said he did not care a rap what the House of Commons said on the matter because he could put a stop to this Bill; but he (Colonel Denny) maintained that no Chancellor of the Exchequer could long stand in the way of the opinion of the House of Commons; if he did he would be liable to removal as an obstruction. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said America would be able to bring arguments to show that they need not take off their rates on our shipping unless authorities in this country took off not only the Government light dues but the local light dues. He (Colonel Denny) wished to observe that the local light dues had nothing whatever to do with it; they were not imposed by the Government, and the law passed by Congress referred explicitly to dues imposed by Governments of foreign countries. The Chancellor of the Exchequer wished them to believe that while the shipowners of this country thought they were being badly treated there was in reality nothing the matter. The condition of the shipping industry was well-known to the President of the Board of Trade, and he thought that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer would ascertain how many freight-earning ships were laid up, he would surely be convinced that things were not so bright as he thought. The condition of the shipowning trade had been one of intense competition for many years past. Apart from the question of simple justice, there was no necessity for this tax. It had been avoided by the Government of every other country except that of Turkey. He held in his hand a statement of the respective tonnage dues charged by various countries, which tonnage dues included not only the light dues but also those charged in the country by local dock authorities, and he found that in Antwerp the tonnage dues charged were only one-fifth of the dues charged in London, exclusive of the light dues, in Hamburg they were half, and in Rotterdam they were one-ninth of what were charged in London. This was not a case for hon. Members to get up and talk of the general taxpayer, this was a case in which the shipowner claimed a right to be heard. The hon. Member for Glasgow (College), and another hon. Member who had spoken against the Bill, had carefully avoided the question whether the shipowners ought to bear this burden, and had talked about railways also expecting relief in various directions if shipowners had light dues taken off their shoulders.

SIR J. STIRLING-MAXWELL: I certainly think the shipowners should bear the charge they have to meet now.

*COLONEL DENNY proceeded to point out that if the Government would give the shipowners the same strict and legal monopoly as they had granted the railways with respect to freights he did not think the shipowners would object to having to bear this burden. This was a matter of abstract justice. They had here a gigantic trade which was made to pay for the lighting of the coast, which was absolutely necessary for the carrying on of the general trade of the country, of the total value of which freight formed only a small part. It was owing to natural circumstances that these goods could not be brought to this country otherwise than by water. If there were a tunnel between this country and Ireland all the goods coming from Ireland by way of that tunnel would escape these light dues altogether. He held that these dues were paid by the wrong people, that if not paid by the wrong people they were extravagant, and that if they were not paid by the wrong people and were not extravagant they were collected by the wrong parties. That was what was called in Scotland a succession of pleas in law. The right hon. Gentleman had said that we could not charge the Navy for light dues because a Committee had reported against it, but five Commissions had reported in favour of the abolition of light dues and no action had been taken by the Government. Not a single Member, including the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had argued against the Bill except on the ground that the Government had not got the money for the purposes under discussion. The House of Commons in this matter should consider whether the taxpayer's interest in this matter should be entirely predominant, or whether as a matter of justice this burden should not be removed from this great industry.

MR. LAWSON WALTON (Leeds, S.) said he would like to say a word or two in support of the Bill, but his views had not been influenced in its favour by the observations of the hon. Member for Kilmarnock. The hon. Member started with a proposition which ought to be traversed at the very outset. He had stated that these dues had not been put upon the consumer, and if the hon. Member had completed that proposition he would have said that they were not borne by the producer either. He thought on the contrary that this burden was borne, and necessarily borne, by the consumer and the producer, and that being so, the policy in this Bill had a great weight of argument in its favour. The burden was borne by the consumer because the amount of these dues was added to the cost of the carriage of the goods, which the consumer had to pay. The charge for transport must directly or indirectly have an influence on the purchase price of the commodity carried, and whether one dealt with railway rates, or freights—and light, harbour, and dock dues, which were added to the freights, the price must be fixed by someone, and, therefore, the consumer who purchased seaborne goods, had to pay not only the price fixed by the exporter on those goods, but also the cost of bringing them to the market at which the consumer purchased them. On that ground, therefore, he did not advance the argument that it was an unjust imposition. On the other hand the producer had equally to pay these dues because, as he understood, light dues were imposed on vessels clearing, just as they were on vessels discharging, and in that way the exporter was compelled to pay dues which were collected at the port of export, but whoever had to pay, it was obviously an addition to the original cost of production *plus* the cost of carriage. That being the case the question for the House to consider was whether it was desirable or not to remove this imposition. There was nothing unjust in it. The main argument that had been used was that the shipping industry was in distress, but he submitted that the real argument was that the lighting of our shores, and the accommodation of the shipping of the world was a national obligation and it was a duty which the country ought to perform. On that ground he supported the Bill.

Mr. BAYLEY (Derbyshire, Chesterfield) said the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made the astounding statement that whatever vote the House might give the

Government would take no notice of it, and would not give the Bill the slightest facilities.

*Mr. RITCHIE said he did not say anything of the kind. He had said nothing about not giving facilities, but had said that this Bill could not be operative unless the Government moved the financial clause which would give it validity.

Mr. BAYLEY asked whether, if there was a majority for the financial clause, the Government would be willing to go on with the Bill.

*Mr. RITCHIE: Certainly not.

Mr. BAYLEY said the first clause alone would supply him with a justification for supporting the Bill. He believed in making the Government itself directly responsible for the control of our coasts. They relieved the shipowners, but those who had the freights would get the benefit. It was the duty of the Government to keep the sea open for all. He hoped they would reconsider their decision. When he heard the Chancellor of the Exchequer say he would not give the Bill the slightest assistance, he began to think he was living in the age of the Stuarts, when the Crown tried to do what certainly the Government were not strong enough to do to-day. The sailors of this country did not believe that their great nation was doing all it could for the protection of their lives in properly lighting our coasts. There was consequently a strong feeling at the back of this Bill, which he hoped would be accepted.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 103; Noes, 114. (Division List No. 56.)

AYES.

Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Asher, Alexander
Baird, John George Alexander
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Bayley, Thomas (*Derbyshire*)
Bignold, Arthur
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Causton, Richard Knight
Cawley, Frederick
Cecil, Evelyn (*Aston Manor*)
Colomb, Sir John Chas. Ready
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Craig, Charles Curtis (*Antrim, S*
Cremer, William Randal
Crombie, John William
Crooks, William
Cust, Henry John C.
Davies, Alfred (*Carmarthen*)
Davies, M. Vaughan (*Cardign*
Denny, Colonel
Doxford, Sir Wm. Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Elibank, Master of
Evans, Sir F. H. (*Maidstone*)
Faber, George Denison (*York*)
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Hall, Edward Marshall
Hamilton, Marq. of (*Londondy*
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Harwood, George
Hayne, Rt Hon. Chas. Seale-
Hayter, Rt Hon Sir Arthur D.
Heath, James (*Staffs., N. W.*)
Helme, Norval Watson
Horner, Frederick William
Hoult, Joseph
Houston, Robert Paterson
Jacoby, James Alfred
Jones, David B. (*Swansea*)
Jones, Wm. (*Carnarvonshire*)
Kimber, Henry
King, Sir Henry Seymour
Lambton, Hon. Fredk. Wm.
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Lawrence, Sir Jos. (*Monm'th*)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leigh, Sir Joseph
Leng, Sir John
Leveson-Gower, Fredk. N. S.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lucas, Reg'ld J. (*Portsmouth*)
Macdona, John Cumming
M'Killop, Jas. (*Stirlingshire*)
Manners, Lord Cecil
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morgan, D. J. (*Walthamstow*)
Morgan, J. Lloyd (*Carmarthen*
Myers, William Henry
O'Connor, T. P. (*Liverpool*)
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Palmer, Sir C. M. (*Durham*)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Perks, Robert William
Pilkington, Lt.-Col. Richard
Pirie, Duncan V.
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Pym, C. Guy
Rea, Russell
Reed, Sir Edw. Jas. (*Cardiff*)
Reid, Sir R. Threshie (*Dumfries*
Remnant, Jas. Farquharson
Renwick, George
Rickett, J. Compton
Ridley, Hon M. W. (*Stalybridge*
Roberts, John H. (*Denbighs.*)
Robertson, Edmund (*Dundee*)
Robson, William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Russell, T. W.
Sandys, Lt.-Col. Thos. Myles
Seely, Maj. J. E. B (*Isle of Wight*
Seton-Karr, Sir Henry
Shaw, Thomas (*Hawick, B.*)
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (*Renfrew*
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Taylor, Austin (*East Toxteth*)
Thomas, David A. (*Merthyr*)
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Walker, Col. William Hall
Wallace, Robert
Walton, J. Lawson (*Leeds, S.*)
Wason, E. (*Clackmannan*)
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Willox, Sir John Archibald
Wilson, A. Stanley (*York, E.R.*
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Charles M'Arthur and Mr. Runciman.

NOES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Aird, Sir John
Allen, Chas. P. (*Glos., Stroud*)
Allsopp, Hon. George
Anstruther, H. T.
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Atherley-Jones, L.
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt Hon Sir H.
Austin, Sir John
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hon A. J. (*Manch'r*
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (*Leeds*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Boland, John
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith-
Brown, Sir Alx. H. (*Shropsh.*)
Cameron, Robert
Campbell, Rt Hn J A (*Glasg.*)
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Chamberlain, Rt Hon J (*Birm*
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Chapman, Edward
Charrington, Spencer
Cook, Sir Frederick Lucas
Cross, H. Shepherd (*Bolton*)
Crossley, Sir Savile
Dalkeith, Earl of
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Dalziel, James Henry
Dewar, John A. (*Inverness-sh.*)
Doogan, P. C.
Duncan, J. Hastings
Dunn, Sir William
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Hart
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Ed.
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fisher, William Hayes
FitzGerald, Sir Robt. Penrose
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Fyler, John Arthur
Garfit, William
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (*Elgin & Nrn*
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Greene, W. Raymond- (*Cambs*
Guthrie, Walter Murray
Hamilton, Rt Hn Ld. G. (*Midx*
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Howard, Jno (*Kent, Faver'hm*
Howard, J. (*Midd., Tott'ham*
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*
Knowles, Lees
Labouchere, Henry
Lambert, George
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*
Lawson, John Grant
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Chas. W. (*Evesham*
Lowe, Francis William
Lundon, W.
M'Iver, Sir Lewis (*Edinb'rgh, W*
Malcolm, Ian
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Maxwell, W J H (*Dumfriesshire*
Mitchell, William (*Burnley*)
Morrell, George Herbert
Morrison, James Archibald
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mount, William Arthur
Mowbray, Sir Robt. Gray C.
Murray, Rt Hn A. Graham (*Bute*
Newdegate, Francis A. N.
Nicholson, William Graham
Nolan, Col. John P. (*Galway, N*
Nolan, Joseph (*Louth, S.*)
O'Brien, James F. X. (*Cork*)
O'Brien, Patrick (*Kilkenny*)
O'Kelly, J. (*Roscommon, N.*)
O'Malley, William
Percy, Earl
Ratcliff, R. F.

Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Roche, John
Rose, Charles Day
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Spencer, Sir E. (*W. Bromwich*)
Stanley, Edw. Jas. (*Somerset*)
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs*)
Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Talbot, Rt Hn J. G. (*Oxf'd Univ.*
Thornton, Percy M.
Valentia, Viscount
Walrond, Rt Hn Sir William H.
Wason, J. Cathcart (*Orkney*)
Welby, Lt.-Col A. C. E (*Taunton*
Whiteley, G. (*York, W. R.*)
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Wilson, J. W. (*Worcestersh. N.*
Wilson-Todd, W. H. (*Yorks.*)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (*Bath*
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir John Stirling-Maxwell and Sir Charles Renshaw.

DRUNKENNESS AND REGISTRATION OF CLUBS (IRELAND) BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.), in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, said that it was an extension to Ireland of the English Act of last session on the subject of clubs and drunkenness. There was a Government Bill for carrying out a similar extension in the case of Scotland; but the measure now before the House was in charge of a private Member. Irish Members on both sides of the House were abolutely agreed in regard to the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time:"

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (MR. ATKINSON, Londonderry, N.), while thoroughly in sympathy with the main object of those who had charge of the Bill, said that when it reached the Committee Stage it would be absolutely necessary to modify some of the clauses, which were so drastic in their present shape that they must provoke reaction and defeat the desires of the promoters of temperance. He could not agree that the Bill resembled in every respect the measure of last year. Some of the provisions with regard to drunkenness were so extravagant that it would be quite impossible to carry them out. For instance, it was provided that whoever was found in charge of any person, animal, or thing, and placed the same in danger by becoming drunk, should be liable to a fine of not more than £2, or imprisonment for a month. That was to say, that if a man was found coming home drunk from market with a basket of the most worthless crockery in his possession he could be put in prison for a month.

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.) said that as a member of the Ulster Unionist party he hoped the Bill would be granted a Second Reading, although some modification of its provisions might be necessary in Committee.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.) said the Bill was a most important one, and in his opinion it treated the working classes very unfairly. Under it, if a man took a glass too much he was liable to be sent to prison for a month. The severity of some of this Bill's provisions was revolting to common sense and, if passed, must give Irishmen cause to think the English Parliament was not fit to regulate Irish affairs. He trusted that the hon. Member in charge of it would not press it until there were more Irish members present, so that the more obnoxious and severe clauses might be struck out.

SIR FREDERICK BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said the hon.

Member who introduced the Bill had claimed that the whole Irish Party was in favour of it, whereas the only Irish Member who had spoken opposed it.

Colonel NOLAN : I only gave expression to my personal views.

Mr. CORBETT: I said the Ulster Members were not opposed to it.

Sir FREDERICK BANBURY said he was referring to the Irish Nationalist Members, and although the hon. and gallant Member might represent only himself he was a very representative Member, and his opinions should carry with them great weight. He found in the Bill an extraordinary provision that any person found drunk in any public place or highway while being in charge of a child, apparently under the age of seven years, shall be liable, etc. Why had the word "apparently" been introduced there ?

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: It is in the English Bill.

Sir FREDERICK BANBURY suggested it did not follow that it was right to use the word. He was not at all in favour of the teetotal legislation passed during the last five or six years. He thought they would have done better if they had let it alone. It was quite possible, too, that a Bill appropriate to England might not be suitable for Ireland.

Colonel LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) appealed to the Temperance Party whether they were not flogging a willing horse too much. The House of Commons was convinced that drunkenness and intemperance were the worst possible failings that could appertain to a nation and had done much to promote temperance during the last ten or fifteen years. In the days of their grandfathers drunkenness was not looked upon as a crime—it was treated rather as a joke and a species of amusement, especially by the upper classes. But as the evil extended to all classes a feeling began to grow that steps should be taken to put it down. Accordingly a number of men went through the country preaching the gospel of temperance. Many devoted their whole lives to the advocacy of it, and gradually a better tone began to prevail. Then came the age of legislation. The temperance party had succeeded in making their feelings and wishes known throughout the English nation, but he did think they were going too far now. To say that if a man got a glass too much at a friend's house and then proceeded homewards he should at once be locked up, even if he were only slightly overcome with drink, was going too far. Legislation of that drastic nature did not do any good, and they ought rather to look to education for the inculcation of temperance principles among all classes of society. No doubt as time went on and the lower and middle classes were educated to a higher sense of their responsibilities to the State, there would be a greater amount of temperance, and a greater belief that intemperance was disgusting not only to one's immediate friends, but to the man in the street, and to the nation at large. But to attempt to impose the penalties proposed by this Bill was carrying the matter a great deal too far. It was about the most extreme measure he had known to be placed before the House of Commons ; its penalties were the most absurd he had ever heard of; and he doubted whether the temperance party were doing themselves any good by making such proposals. He regretted there were so few Irish Members present, but if he could be assured that the hon. Member the Leader of the Irish Party was in favour of the measure it would go a long way towards mitigating his opposition. In the absence of any such declaration he felt it to be his duty to oppose the Bill, because, although the promoters had an excellent object in view, he thought they had gone the wrong way to work.

MR. M'GOVERN (Cavan, W.) expressed his surprise that English Members who knew nothing at all about Ireland, or the wants and wishes of her people, should get up one after another and talk against time in order to defeat this measure. Surely if such a Bill was good for England it was good also for Ireland. A week or two ago the Irish Saturday Night Closing Bill was opposed because it did not deal with clubs; now the very Gentlemen who opposed that measure, opposed a Bill which did propose to deal with clubs. Hon. Members ought really to exercise some discretion in their opposition to Irish feelings. He desired strongly to support the Second Reading of the Bill.

MR. MOONEY (Dublin Co., S.) said it was a mistake to suppose that the whole of the Irish Party were in favour of this Bill. They were undoubtedly in favour of the second part, which dealt with the registration of clubs, but he personally would certainly not support a measure containing clauses of such a penal nature as were now proposed. The hon. Member for South Tyrone would have been well advised to have brought in two separate Bills, because probably every Member would have supported the proposal for the registration of clubs, that being a matter as urgently requiring consideration in Ireland as in England.

SIR FREDERICK BANBURY explained that his remarks had reference solely to the first part of the Bill. The purpose of the second part, in reference to the registration of clubs, was an excellent one.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport) said he was at first rather attracted by the statement that the Bill went on all fours with the English measure, but on examination he found that five out of the first six clauses were not contained in the English Bill at all. Some of the clauses were really extraordinary. For instance, Clause 11 proposed to enact that upon premises or in houses let in rooms, any person who was noisy without lawful excuse should be liable to a fine of 40s. or a month's imprisonment. That was one of the most extraordinary instances of temperance run mad he had ever heard of. Who was to judge of what was being noisy? What one person thought noisy another person thought musical, and what was joviality to one man was vulgarity to another. And what was a lawful excuse for being noisy? Would it be unlawful to be noisy on hearing that our Army had won a great victory? Or, if an hon. Member was blessed with a son and heir, although it would be extremely improper to be noisy near the room in which the son and heir was, surely it would not be wrong to drink the health of that son and heir elsewhere? To propose to put upon an authority the duty of deciding what was legitimate or illegitimate noise, and also what was a legitimate or illegitimate excuse for that legitimate or illegitimate noise, was practically reducing the Bill to an absurdity, and to attempt to legislate upon such lines was really making a farce of the great and glorious cause of temperance.

*Sir LEWIS McIVER (Edinburgh, W.) said he had considerable sympathy with certain portions of the Bill, but his attitude was largely influenced by the degree of interest taken by the representatives of the country chiefly concerned. Only three Irish Members had spoken, two of whom opposed the Bill, and the other gave merely a formal assent. As an upholder of the principles of local self-government, he thought the House ought to accept that verdict of two to one against the Bill. The measure would effect drastic alterations in the social rights and privileges of certain sections of the population of Ireland, and so long as the British Parliament had to deal with Ireland her representatives were entitled to be heard. He was in favour of the latter part of the Bill, but to pass, at the fag-end of a Friday afternoon, when debate was impossible, a most severe penal measure of this entirely novel character, would inflict upon Ireland an injustice to which he must decline to be a party.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 79; Noes, 102. (Division List No. 57.)

AYES.

Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Asher, Alexander
Atherley-Jones, L.
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Bagot, Capt. Josceline FitzRoy
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (*Hornsey*
Bayley, Thomas (*Derbyshire*)
Bigwood, James
Boland, John
Caldwell, James
Cameron, Robert
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Corbett, A. Cameron (*Glasg.*)
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Craig, Chas. Curtis (*Antrim, S.*)
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*
Crombie, John William
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Dalziel, James Henry
Denny, Colonel
Duncan, J. Hastings
Dunn, Sir William
Edwards, Frank
Elibank, Master of
Evans, Sir F. H. (*Maidstone*)
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (*Leith*
Gurdon, Sir W. Brampton
Hamilton, Marq. of (*Londondy*
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-
Hayter, Rt Hon Sir Arthur D.
Helme, Norval Watson
Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
Jacoby, James Alfred
Jones, Wm. (*Carnarvonshire*)
Joyce, Michael
Lambert, George
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Lawson, John Grant
Leigh, Sir Joseph
Leveson-Gower, Fredk. N. S.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lundon, W.
Macdona, John Cumming
M'Kenna, Reginald
M'Killop, Jas. (*Stirlingshire*)
Maxwell, W J H (*Dumfriesshire*
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morgan, J. Lloyd (*Carmarthen*
O'Malley, William
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Partington, Oswald
Perks, Robert William
Pilkington, Colonel Richard
Pirie, Duncan V.
Reid, Sir R Threshie (*Dumfries*
Roberts, John H. (*Denbighs.*)
Robertson, Edmund (*Dundee*)
Roche, John
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rose, Charles Day
Runciman, Walter
Sandys, Lt.-Col. Thos. Myles
Shaw, Thomas (*Hawick, B.*)
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (*Renfrew*)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Jn. M.
Sullivan, Donal
Talbot, Rt Hn. J G. (*Oxf'd Univ.*
Thomas, David A. (*Merthyr*)
Wallace, Robert
Wason, E. (*Clackmannan*)
Wason, J. Cathcart (*Orkney*)
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Whiteley, G. (*York, W. R.*)
Wilson, J. W. (*Worcester., N.*)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Woodhouse, Sir J T (*Huddersf'd*

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. T. W. Russell and Mr. M'Govern.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir A. F.
Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Allsopp, Hon. George
Anstruther, H. T.
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Austin, Sir John
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Baird, John George Alexander
Balcarres, Lord
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Bignold, Arthur
Butcher, John George
Campbell, Rt Hn J A (*Glasg.*)
Cecil, Evelyn (*Aston Manor*)
Charrington, Spencer
Clare, Octavius Leigh
Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Cook, Sir Frederick Lucas
Crossley, Sir Savile

Cust, Henry John C.
Dimsdale, Rt. Hon. Sir Jos. C.
Doogan, P. C.
Doxford, Sir Wm. Theodore
Duke, Henry Edward
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. Hart
Elliot, Hon. A. Ralph Douglas
Faber, George Denison (*York*)
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Ed.
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Fisher, William Hayes
FitzGerald, Sir Robt. Penrose
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S.W.*
Garfit, William
Gibbs, HnA.G.H(*City of Lond*
Godson, Sir Augustus Frederick
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (*Elgin & Nrn*
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gray, Ernest (*West Ham*)
Greene, Hy. D. (*Shrewsbury*)
Greene, W. Raymond (*Cambs*
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heath, James (*Staffs., N. W.*)
Henderson, Sir Alexander
Hermon-Hodge, Sir Robert T.
Horner, Frederick William
Houston, Robert Paterson
Howard, Jno (*Kent, Faver'h'm*
Howard, J. (*Midd., Tott'ham*
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop.*
Kimber, Henry
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Long, Col. Chas. W. (*Evesham*
Lucas, Reg'ld J. (*Portsmouth*)
M'Iver, Sir Lewis (*Edinburgh W*
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Mooney, John J.
Morgan, D. J. (*Walthamstow*)
Morrell, George Herbert
Morrison, James Archibald
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Myers, William Henry
Newdegate, Francis A. N.
Nicholson, William Graham
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Nolan, Col. J. P. (*Galway, N.*)
Nolan, Joseph (*Louth, S.*)
O'Brien, Patrick (*Kilkenny*)
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Pym, C. Guy
Ratcliff, R. F.
Remnant, Jas. Farquharson
Renshaw, Sir Charles Bine
Renwick, George
Ridley, Hon. M W. (*Stalybridge*
Roberts, Samuel (*Sheffield*)
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Seely, Maj. JEB. (*Isle of Wight*
Seton-Karr, Sir Henry
Sinclair, Louis (*Romford*)
Spencer, Sir E. (*W. Bromwich*)
Stanley, Edw. Jas. (*Somerset*)
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier
Thornton, Percy M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. William Hall
Welby, Lt-Col. A. C. E. (*Taunt'n*
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Williams Rt Hn J Powell-(*Birm*
Willox, Sir John Archibald
Wilson, A. S. (*York, E. R.*)
Wilson-Todd, Wm. H. (*Yorks*)
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R (*Bath*)
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart

TELLERS FOR THE NOES.—
Colonel Lockwood and
Sir Frederick Banbury.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Herbert Roberts.*)

Debate arising.

MR. FLOWER (Bradford, W.) thought that the hon. Member could hardly expect to carry a measure of this magnitude *sub silentio*. The Bill could be opposed on many grounds, the most effective of which was that it was essentially a class measure. The passage of the Bill would probably not affect the convenience of a single Member of the House, but it would mean a great change in the social life of the working classes, and a change to which he believed they were averse.

And, it being half-past Five of the clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Tuesday, 21st April.

OUTDOOR RELIEF (PENSIONERS) BILL.

Read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP No. 3).

Mr. CROMPTON RICKETT reported from the Committee on Group No. 3 of Railway Bills; that, for the convenience of parties, they had adjourned till Wednesday, 22nd April, at Eleven of the Clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP No. 1).

Mr. KIMBER reported from the Committee on Group No. 1 of Railway Bills; that, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned until Friday, 24th April, at half-past Eleven of the Clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

Adjourned at twenty-eight minutes before Six o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 6*th April*, 1903.

The House met at two of the Clock.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, owing to indisposition.

Whereupon Mr. James William Lowther, the Chairman of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table, and after Prayers, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Bath Corporation Water Bill, read the third time, and passed.

Bridgwater Gas Bill (King's Consent signified). Bill read the third time, and passed.

Broadstairs Gas Bill; Burgess Hill and St. John's Common Gas Bill; Great Northern and City Railway Bill; Ipswich Gas Bill; Market Drayton Gas Bill; Stoke Newington Borough Council Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Harrow Road and Paddington Tramways Bill; Highland and Invergarry and Fort Augustus Railway Companies Bill; Romford and District Tramways Bill. Read a second time, and committed.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill. Read a second time, and committed.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 1).

Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Mitchelstown, in the county of Cork, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Gerald Balfour.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 2).

Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Brixham, Brumby and Frodingham, Dawlish, Horbury, Hucknall-under-Huthwaite, Newton-in-Makerfield, Orrill, Scunthorpe, Sidmouth, and Yeovil, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Gerald Balfour.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 3) BILL.

To confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Auckland (Rural), Carisbrooke and Northwood, Drayton-in-Hales, Illogan, Ingleton, Port Dinorwic, Sevenoaks, South Shields (Rural), Stafford (Rural), and Wilmslow, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Gerald Balfour.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDER (No 1.) BILL.

"To conform a Provisional Order made by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Mitchelstown, in the county of Cork," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 138.]

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 2) BILL.

"To confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Brixham, Brumby and Frodingham, Dawlish, Horbury, Hucknall-under-Huthwaite, Newton-in-Makerfield, Orrell, Scunthorpe, Sidmouth, and Yeovil," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 139.]

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 3) BILL.

"To confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts, 1882 and 1888, relating to Auckland (Rural), Carisbrooke and Northwood, Drayton-in-Hales, Illogan, Ingleton, Port Dinorwic, Sevenoaks, South Shields (Rural), Stafford (Rural), and Wilmslow," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 140.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 1) BILL.

Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders Confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time to-morrow.

MAIDSTONE GAS BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

LONDON HYDRAULIC POWER BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table.

MIDLAND RAILWAY BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

SITTINGBOURNE DISTRICT GAS BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table.

SELECTION.

Mr. HALSEY reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Member from the Parliamentary Panel of Members of this House to act as Commissioners in pursuance of The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899:—Sir Charles B. Renshaw; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. W. J. Maxwell.

Report to lie upon the Table.

PETITIONS.

BANKRUPTCY LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Halifax, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Petition from Southampton, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Petitions in favour: from St. Helens; Oldham; Walsall; Batley; and Andover; to lie upon the Table.

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Glenmuick; Perth; and Edinburgh; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION IN THE METROPOLIS.

Petition from Lambeth, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petitions for alteration: from Queensbury; Annan; Inverkeithing; and Renfrew; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Renfrew, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

Petition from Andover, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC HOUSES (HOURS OF CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Dundee, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.

Petitions against: from Devonport; Finsbury Park; Bristol; Watford; and Kingston-upon-Hull; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petition from Brixton, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

SOLICITORS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Perth, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

CERTIFIED DAY INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS (PARLIAMENTARY GRANT).

Paper [presented 3rd April] to be printed. [No. 107.]

LUNACY (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Forty-fifth Annual Report of the General Board of Commissioners in Lunacy for Scotland [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PRISONS (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Twenty-fifth Annual Report of the Prison Commissioners for Scotland, being the Sixty-fourth Annual Report on Prisons in Scotland, 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

OFFICERS' EXPENSES.

Copy presented, of Report of the Committee on Expenses incurred by Officers of the Army [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

MUNICIPAL ELECTION PETITION (BOROUGH OF SHREWSBURY).

Copy presented, of Report made by Morton William Smith, esquire, barrister-at-law, the Commissioner appointed for the trial of the petition against the election of a town councillor for the Castle Fields Ward of the borough of Shrewsbury, holden on the 1st November 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EXPLOSIONS (IGNITION OF POWDER AT THE E. C. POWDER COMPANY'S FACTORY AT STONE, NEAR DARTFORD).

Copy presented, of Report by Captain J. H. Thomson, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Explosives, to the right hon. the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on the circumstances attending an accident which occurred in the drying house for smokeless powder at the Factory of the E. C. Powder Company, Limited, at Beacon Wood, Stone, near Dartford, on the 3rd March 1903 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

BANKING, RAILWAY, AND CANAL STATISTICS (IRELAND).

Copy presented, of Report on the Banking, Railway, and Canal Statistics of Ireland for the half-year ended 31st December 1902 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

GREEK LOAN OF 1898.

Account presented up to 31st March 1903 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

EGYPTIAN GUARANTEED LOAN OF 1885.

Account presented up to 31st March 1903 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 2950 and 2951 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Local Education Expenditure—Accounts.

Mr. ELLIS GRIFFITH (Anglesey): To ask the President of the Local Government Board when it is proposed to issue new instructions as to the accounts of the educational expenditure of local educational authorities under the Education Act of 1902.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) I have in preparation circular letters on this subject, which will, I hope, be issued very shortly.

Census of England and Wales—Houses Building.

Mr. FREDERICK WILSON (Norfolk, Mid.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been called to the figures in the Census for England and Wales, showing that the total number of houses building in 1901 was 61,909, as compared with 38,387 in the previous decade; if he can state how many of these houses building were cottages or workmen's houses; whether each tenement in a flat or block is reckoned as a separate house; and whether he will consider the advisability of providing that more detailed particulars will be given in future census returns.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) As regards the first point, I am aware of the figures on the subject. The answer to the next two points is in the negative. With respect to the concluding part of the Question, the Registrar General is at all times willing to give careful consideration to any practical suggestions made to him for the improvement of any future census, and note will be taken of the suggestion made by the hon. Member.

Newspaper Publication in Gibraltar.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will explain why the application, dated 19th November 1902, to license a paper to be called El Eco del Derecho (The Echo of Right), and to be published in Gibraltar, from Andrés Fernandez, which was accompanied by copies of correspondence on the matter between Andrés Fernandez and His Excellency the Governor of Gibraltar, was refused.

(*Answered by Mr Secretary Chamberlain.*) The granting of licences for the publication of newspapers in Gibraltar is vested by Law in the Governor of the fortress. The Governor informed me that he had refused Fernandez a licence because he was convinced that the publication of the proposed paper would be prejudicial to the interests of the fortress, for the protection of which he is responsible, and I saw no reason for overruling his decision.

Postal Deliveries in Glenavy District, County Antrim.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.): To ask the Postmaster-General if his attention has been directed to the fact that owing to an alteration of the mid-day delivery of letters in the Glenavy district of county Antrim certain houses which were formerly included in the delivery are now excluded; and, if so, will he consider the desirability of extending the delivery to those houses which formerly enjoyed the advantage of a mid-day delivery.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) Yes; I hope to be able to make arrangements of the kind suggested in the Question.

Telegraphic Department—Resignations and Transfers.

MR. BAYLEY (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he will state the number of telegraphists who have resigned the Telegraph Department since 1897 for service elsewhere, and the number of telegraphists since that date who have been transferred to higher branches of the Postal Telegraph Department.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) The causes of resignation are not always stated, but, so far as can be ascertained, about 100 telegraphists in the Central Telegraph Office have resigned since 1897 for service elsewhere, of whom twenty-six took up duty as telegraphists under the South African Administrations. The number of telegraphists who have been transferred to higher branches of the Postal Telegraph Service is 142.

Postal and Telegraphic Services—Double Increments for Dual Qualifications.

MR. H. D. GREENE (Shrewsbury): To ask the Postmaster-General if he will state whether a telegraphist who has been transferred as such from an amalgamated office and subsequently acquires postal qualifications, is entitled to a double increment for dual qualifications, or whether the rules regulating double increments for dual qualifications only apply when a servant possessing postal qualifications subsequently acquires telegraphic qualifications.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) An officer originally appointed to an amalgamated office bears the designation of sorting clerk and telegraphist, and as such is by the terms of his appointment liable to be employed on both postal and telegraph duties at any office to which he may be attached. Under ordinary circumstances such an officer is not entitled on transfer to the double increment for dual qualifications which is granted to officers who were originally appointed as sorter, sorting clerk, or telegraphist, and were not liable to perform both postal and telegraph duties.

Central London Railway—Damage by Vibration.

MR. H. D. GREENE: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can state when arrangements will be completed for stopping the annoyance and damage from vibration arising on the Central London Railway; and whether the Board of Trade will now take steps to compel the adoption of the suggestions of their Committee, in view of the answer of the President of the Board of Trade on the 26th of November last.†

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) The Central London Railway Company assure me that they are doing their utmost to carry out with the least possible delay the recommendations of the Committee referred to. With that object sixty-four motor cars were ordered in May of last year. Several cars have already been delivered, and six motor car trains are now in actual service, while a seventh will be added in the course of the present week. The remainder of the cars will be put into service as soon as they are delivered to the company.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxv., 498

Safety Rails on Fishing Boats.

MR. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): To ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether his attention has been called to the recent loss of life from men falling overboard steam, trawl, and line fishing vessels; and whether he will consider the advisability of requiring that such vessels should be fitted with safety rails to prevent such accidents.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) The Board of Trade have given attention to this subject, and ever since 1890 have pressed upon skippers the desirability of providing stanchions and life lines The Department will continue to urge the expediency of using such appliances, but it has no power to require their adoption.

Damage by the Sea at Hallsands, Devon.

MR. MILDMAY (Devonshire, Totnes): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the condition of the village of Hallsands in the Start Bay; and whether he is now prepared to make any statement on the subject.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) The matter is still under consideration.

Imports of Cattle, Dead Meat, etc.

MR. ALFRED DAVIES (Carmarthen, Boroughs): To ask the President of the Board of Agriculture if he will state the number of cattle, sheep, and swine and weight of dead meat imported into the United Kingdom in the years 1892 and 1902.

(*Answered by Mr. Hanbury.*) The number of cattle, sheep, and swine and the weight of dead meat imported into the United Kingdom in the years 1892 and 1902, respectively, are as follows:—

Description.	Cattle, Sheep, and Swine.	
	1892.	1902.
	No.	No.
Cattle	502,237	419,488
Sheep	79,048	293,199
Swine	3,826	—

Description.	Dead Meat.	
	1892.	1902.
	cwt.	cwt.
Beef	2,923,022	4,438,917
Mutton	1,768,378	3,745,095
Bacon, Hams, and Pork	5,494,971	7.432,632
Rabbits	107,630	451,457
Meat other than Beef or Mutton (Preserved otherwise than by salting)	163,098	247,434
Meat (unenumerated) (salted or fresh)	150,573	655,023
Total Dead Meat	10,607,672	16,970,558

Plague in India—Suggested Commission.

Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether, in view of the fact that 500,000 people died last year in India from plague, and of the spread of the disease, he will consider the advisability of sending out a Commission consisting of practical sanitarians, with a scientific expert at their head, to investigate the causes of the disease and devise a remedy.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) The hon. Member is probably not aware that the subject of plague in India has recently been investigated by a very strong Commission, fully competent to deal with it in its scientific, administrative, and sanitary aspects. Their Report is accepted as the standard authority on the matter, and has been of the greatest value to the Indian Government in combating the disease.

Interest on Government Rupee Paper—Fixed Rate of Exchange.

Sir MANCHERJEE BHOWNAGGREE (Bethnal Green, N.E.): To ask the Secretary of State for India if he will consider favourably a proposal of the Chambers of Commerce in India to the Government of India to guarantee payment of interest on Government rupee paper enfaced for payment of interest in London at the fixed rate of 1s. 4d. per rupee.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) The proposal to which the hon. Member refers has not been laid before me by the Government of India. Should it be submitted to me, it will receive careful consideration; but I cannot now give any indications of the probable decision.

Payment of Income Tax—Statistics.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state at what rate per pound Income Tax was paid in the last financial year by persons having incomes of £200, £300, £400, £500, and £600 respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) The virtual rate of Income Tax in the year 1902–3, after allowing for the effect of the several abatements, was for persons with incomes of £200, 3d. in the £; £300, 7d.; £400, 9d.; £500, 10½d.; £600, 1s.

Secondary Education—Assistance by Endowed Schools.

Mr. BRIGG (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether he will consider the advisability of taking steps to provide that, in places where county councils find that the supply of secondary education is inefficient, the trustees of endowed schools shall be required to assist the county councils to carry out their duty.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) The existence of an endowed school in any locality provides for the supply of secondary education to the extent of the capacity of the school. The object which the hon. Member has in view would be better attained by arrangement between trustees and local authorities than by legislation which would enable local authorities to put compulsion upon the trustees.

Voluntary Schools.

Mr. J. H. LEWIS (Flint Boroughs): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education if he will state by what name the Board propose in future to call the schools known before the passing of the Education Act, 1902, as voluntary schools.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) The Board propose to continue the name "voluntary schools" to describe schools the fabric of which is provided and maintained by voluntary effort.

Education Grants.

Mr. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid.): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education if he will explain why, in addition to the sum of £1,100,000, representing one half year's grant under Section 10 of the Education Act, 1902, there is also borne on the Estimates for the Board of Education a full year's grant to school boards under 33 and 34 Vic., c. 75, s. 97, and 60 and 61 Vic., c. 16, amounting to £315,000, instead of one half year only, seeing that the grants under The Education Act, 1902, are in lieu of the grants under the former Acts.

(*Answered by Sir William Anson.*) It was necessary to include a full year's grant, under 33 and 34 Vict., c. 75, s. 97, in the Estimates for 1903–4, because this grant runs from September to September, and the year 1903–4 began with half a year's grant accrued, and maturing for payment during 1903–4.

Inishowen Rural District Council—Appointment of Clerk.

Mr. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Inishowen Rural District Council recently appointed an assistant clerk without publishing the vacancy in any local or other paper; and whether, in view of the provisions of the Local Government Acts, and of the fact that the Council increased the salary of the clerk without notice to the ratepayers, he will state what steps he proposes to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) In September, 1899, a Committee of the Council reported in favour of an increased salary to the clerk and of the payment of a salary to his assistant. These recommendations were adopted by the Council and approved by the Local Government Board. The Local Government Acts and Orders do not require the publication of an advertisement in connection with the appointment of an assistant clerk.

Land on the Skerrett Estate, County Clare—Case of Rev. W. J. Elliott.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Irish Land Commission in November, 1901, advanced to the Rev. W. J. Elliott, rector of Ballyvaughan, a portion of the price of a holding on the Skerrett estate, at Newquay, County Clare, thereby enabling him to purchase same under 40th Section of Land Act; that Mr. Elliott acquired the tenant's interest by purchase some months previously by public auction; and that although there were three sub-tenants occupying the entire holding in three different parcels, and who are still in occupation, Mr. Elliott, or some person acting on his behalf, swore an affidavit that he was in actual occupation of this holding, and that there were no sub-tenants on it; will he say what steps, if any, the Land Commission took to ascertain its accuracy; and what steps were taken to acquaint the sub-tenants that the head tenant was trying to purchase their several holdings; and whether, seeing that during the negotiations Mr. Elliott induced two of the three sub-tenants to sign agreements to be monthly and conacre tenants respectively, which were subsequently set aside at Ennis Quarter Sessions in June, 1902, and that Mr. Elliott has commenced ejectment proceedings against one of these sub-tenants, and proceedings against another for recovery of rent in excess of the amount due, will he say what steps the Land Commission intend taking to carry out the requirements of the Act of Parliament as regards occupation and sub-letting.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) Before any advance to Mr. Elliott was sanctioned, he had acquired, by purchase, the interest of the tenant of this holding, and had also obtained from the sub-tenants of portions of the holding the surrender of their interests. The interest of the tenant became thus absolutely vested in him and he was in actual occupation. On this state of facts the advance was properly made. Litigation has since taken place between Mr. Elliott and two of the sub-tenants in respect to the real nature of the surrender, but the suit is still pending.

Granard Union—Printing Contracts.

Mr. TULLY (Leitrim, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the amount paid in Granard Union to the contractor for printing and advertising for the year ended 31st March last; and the amount at which the contractor has obtained the printing and advertising contract this year; and whether, seeing the lowest tender was not accepted for this work in March, 1902, he will state whether the auditor has surcharged the difference between the highest and lowest tender to the parties responsible; and if so, what steps he proposes to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The amount paid in respect of the contract for printing books and forms for the past year was £50, and for advertising £6 12s. For the current year the amount of the contract for printing and advertising is

£27 10s. The audit for the half year ended September last has not yet taken place. It will be open to any person interested to appear before the auditor on the occasion of the audit and lodge an objection to any item to which he takes exception.

Longford Union and Longford District Council—Printing Contract.

MR. TULLY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the total amount paid in Longford Union and Longford District Council for the years ended March, 1900, 1901, and 1902, respectively, for printing, books, advertising, and stationery; the amount of the contract for this work for the present year for Union and District Council; and when were tenders received in these years for the District Council printing and advertising; and, seeing that the lowest tender was not accepted by the guardians in March, 1902, will he say whether the auditor has surcharged to the parties responsible the difference between the highest and lowest tenders, and also the sums paid where no contract was entered into with the District Council; and, if so, what steps he proposes to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The amounts paid in Longford Union for this work in the years mentioned were £95 16s. 1d., £113 7s. 7d., and £87 7s. 10d. respectively; and by the Rural District Council £109 1s. 7d., £74 0s. 7d., and £65 18s. 1d. The amount to be paid in the union and rural district for the same work during the current year is £65. No tenders were received in these years by the District Council. The lowest tender was accepted by the guardians in March, 1902.

Labourers' Cottages in Ireland—Application of Thomas Smith.

MR. M'GOVERN (Cavan, W): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will explain why the application of Thomas Smith for a labourer's cottage on the farm of Thomas Simons, in the townland of Corobay, Ashfield Rural District, Cootehill Union, was refused.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The application was refused by the inspector inasmuch as the applicant at the time of the inquiry was living in the Cootehill Urban District. Independently of this initial objection, however, it was given in evidence at the inquiry that there were several vacant houses available for labourers in the neighbourhood mentioned in the Question, and on this ground also the application, which was originally grounded on the alleged insufficiency of house accommodation in the district, would have been rejected.

Irish Land Bill—Cost of Investigating Titles.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY (Somersetshire, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the cost of investigating titles under the Irish Land Bill will be borne by the purchaser; and, if not, upon what fund will this cost be charged.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The cost connected with the investigation of title will be defrayed out of the purchase money, save to the extent that such investigation will be made without charge under the provisions of Clause 22 (8) of the Bill.

South African War—Colonial Contingents.

SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will say whether the terms stated in telegrams numbers 17 and 18, 3rd October, 1899, Cd. 18, under which over-sea colonial contingents were sent to South Africa in 1899, also governed the despatch of similar contingents which went to South Africa in subsequent years; and, if not, what were the terms upon which the later contingents were despatched; and what were the numbers of men despatched from the several colonies under the different arrangements

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) The later over-sea colonial contingents were not sent to South Africa on precisely similar terms as those which governed the first. The conditions are too varied to admit of my including them in an answer to a Question. The numbers were as follows; 1st Contingent, Canada, 1,105; 1st Contingent, New South Wales, 461; 1st Contingent, South Australia, 121; 1st Contingent,

Queensland, 248; 1st Contingent, Victoria, 240; 1st Contingent, New Zealand, 203; 1st Contingent, Tasmania, 76; 1st Contingent, West Australia, 125; 1st Contingent, Lumsden's Horse, 289; 1st Contingent, Ceylon, 122; 2nd Contingent, Canada, 1,823; 2nd Contingent, New South Wales, 821; 2nd Contingent, South Australia, 110; 2nd Contingent, Queensland, 146; 2nd Contingent, Victoria, 249; 2nd Contingent, New Zealand, 244; 2nd Contingent, Tasmania, 45; 2nd Contingent, West Australia, 97; 3rd Australian Contingent, Australian Bushmen, and 4th Australian Contingent, Imperial Bushmen, 3,279; 3rd New Zealand Contingent, New Zealand Roughriders, 249; 4th New Zealand Contingent, New Zealand Roughriders, 541; 5th New Zealand Contingent, New Zealand Roughriders, 468; 5th and 6th Australian Contingents and Drafts, 5,540; 6th and 7th New Zealand Contingents, 1,118; 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Canadian Mounted Rifles, and 10th Canadian Field Hospital, 2,885; 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Australian Commonwealth Contingents, 4,020; 8th, 9th, and 10th New Zealand Contingents, 3,284; Ceylon Volunteer Company, 100. Speaking generally the majority of the later over-sea colonial contingents were enlisted for one year or the period of the war. As regards pay the first two contingents received ordinary Army rates, which I believe were augmented by the various colonies on a basis of 3s. 4d. a day for privates (others *pro rata.*) The later contingents received Imperial Yeomanry rates of pay from Imperial Funds.

South African Medals — Claims of the Derby Volunteer R.A.M.C.

MR. BELL (Derby): To ask the Secretary of State for War, whether he is aware that men belonging to the Derby Volunteers who volunteered in the Royal Army Medical Corps, and served in the South African War, have not yet received medals; and if so, can he say when they will receive them.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) It is understood that ten men in question served in the war, but of these only six can at present be traced on the medal rolls. Steps are being taken to issue medals to these six, and inquiries will be made concerning the other four.

Rifle Ranges—Half-charge Ammunition.

MR. FREDERICK WILSON: To ask the Secretary of State for War if, in view of the cost and difficulty of providing rifle ranges suitable for long-range practice, he will consider the feasibility of issuing with the new service rifle supplementary half-charge ammunition, accurate up to 600 yards, so that closed ranges which are safe up to 600 yards may be reopened.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) The cost and difficulty of providing rifle ranges suitable for long range practice have been to some extent overcome by the adoption of protected ranges where suitable ground is not available for open ranges. Short range ammunition, which was in use in 1895–7, was not found to be satisfactory. It is hoped that miniature ranges may to a large extent meet these difficulties.

Railway Construction Course for Volunteer Engineers.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE (Bristol, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state what is the course laid down for the instruction of officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of auxiliary engineer forces in railway construction and management; when is the course held; how many men have had or are in course of having this instruction; and what facilities are afforded by the railway companies.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) No special courses of instruction are laid down for Militia or Volunteer Engineers. Two companies of the Royal Monmouthshire, Royal Engineers (Militia), are, however, to be trained with a view to being useful for railway construction work, and one officer and twenty non-commissioned officers of this corps are now at Chatham for a two months course of instruction with the Royal Engineer (Regular) Railway Company there. The 2nd Cheshire Royal Engineers (Volunteers), commanded by Colonel Cotton-Jodrell, consists of employees of the London and North-Western Railway Company; its headquarters are at Crewe.

Sub-district Commanding Royal Engineers have instructions to arrange the annual courses for Royal Engineer Volunteers, so as to correspond as far as possible with the work the corps would have to undertake on mobilisation.

Report on the Health of the Army.

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE: To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state on what date the Report of the Health of the Army for 1900 was presented to the House of Commons; and when the Reports for 1901 and 1902 will be presented.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) The Report for 1900 was presented on 9th May, 1902. That for 1901 is complete and will shortly be presented. As regards the Report for 1902 many of the returns will not reach this country from abroad until next October or November owing to the enormous labour of compilation; moreover, a considerable period is required for the elaboration of the Report from the various Returns. This Report cannot therefore be produced before March or April, 1904.

Volunteers Enlistments.

MR. SEELY (Lincoln): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can now state the number of recruits enlisted for the Volunteers from the 1st November, 1902, to the end of March.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) The returns for the last quarter which contain this information will not all be received before the middle of this month.

Royal Commission on Volunteers and Militia—Representation of Volunteer Medical Service.

SIR JOHN TUKE (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): To ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he proposes to appoint a Volunteer medical officer to serve on the Royal Commission to consider matters relative to the Militia and Volunteers.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Brodrick.*) I am afraid that I cannot promise to include officers of the various departmental corps on the Commission.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

New Recruiting Regulations.

MAJOR SEELY (Isle of Wight): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office when the new recruiting regulations with reference to the age of recruits will be issued.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): A revised edition of the recruiting regulations is being prepared for publication, and will be got out as soon as possible.

MAJOR SEELY: Will the information be given to the House before the Budget is introduced?

MR. BRODRICK: I cannot fix a date.

Royal Field Artillery Guns.

MAJOR SEELY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state at what date the present pattern of Royal Field Artillery Gun was first issued, and for what propelling charge and for what weight of projectile the gun was originally designed.

*MR. BRODRICK: The field gun with which most field batteries are armed was first issued in 1885, and a projectile weighing 12½ lbs. and a propellant of 4 lbs. of black powder were then used. In 1892 it was decided to change this gun into a 15-pounder, using cordite charges. In 1899 an improved pattern of 15-pounder was adopted, and the new batteries raised in 1900 were armed with this gun and the 15-pounder Q. F. Ehrherdt gun, both firing smokeless powder.

Canadian Meat for the Army.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will consider the advisability of allowing the meat of Canadian-bred cattle to be included in the meat contracts for the Army.

MR. BRODRICK: This question has been very carefully considered, and the arrangement under which home-bred beef only can be accepted for Army supplies at home could only be disturbed to the detriment of the home producer.

Trinidad Riots Commission.

MR. EVELYN CECIL (Aston Manor): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Commission of Inquiry into the recent riots in Trinidad has been appointed.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): It has not been appointed, but I am now prepared to nominate for appointment the following gentlemen:—As Chairman, Sir Cecil Clementi Smith, G.C.M.G., who has filled with great credit many offices under the Crown, including that of Governor of the Straits Settlements; Sir H. Evan James, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., who was recently a Commissioner of Sind; and Mr. S. C. Macaskie, K.C., Recorder of Sheffield. The Commissioners will leave for Trinidad on Wednesday April 15. The Secretary to the Commission will be Mr. R. V. Vernon, of the Colonial Office.

West Indian Sugar Exports.

MR. RUNCIMAN (Dewsbury): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, if he can state what proportion of sugar produced in the West Indies is sold in the United States; and what amount of protection against European competition is afforded to this sugar by the countervailing duties levied by the United States Government on bounty-fed sugar.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: According to the latest returns available of the sugar exported from the West Indian Colonies, about three-fourths in value has gone to the United States. The United States Countervailing Duties on European bounty-fed sugar of the best quality vary from about 4s. 6d. per cwt. in the case of France to about 7½d. in the case of Denmark.

Cotton Cultivation in the West Indies.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any portion of the aid grant to the West Indian Islands in 1901 or 1902 has been devoted to encouraging the cultivation of cotton as an alternative to the production of sugar.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The only grant in aid available for the purpose is the grant in aid of Botanic Stations and Agricultural Instruction and Experiments. The Imperial Commissioner of Agriculture for the West Indies, whose Department is paid for out of this grant, has recently devoted much attention to the encouragement of the cultivation of cotton, but I am not aware that any definite sum has been appropriated to this purpose.

Vernacular Education in Ceylon.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Colonies whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that it appears in the recent census returns of the island of Ceylon that out of a population of 3,565,954 souls 2,790,255 are unable to read or write; whether he will consider the advisability of establishing an educational cess to provide elementary vernacular education, seeing that the children of the Tamil labourers, who number roughly a million souls, are devoid of facilities for education.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: My attention has been drawn to the facts referred to by the hon. Member, and the question of providing further educational facilities in Ceylon by means of local rates is under the consideration of a Commission on the Incidence of Taxation which is now sitting in the Colony.

Indentured Coolie Labour in Natal.

SIR MANCHERJEE BHOWNAGGREE (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he has received any Report from the Government of India as to the result of the Conference between that Government and a Commission which was sent from Natal recently to India for the purpose of settling the conditions regarding indentured Coolie labour; whether, on the expiry of their indentures, the labourers will be at liberty to remain in the Colony without being compelled to pay a poll tax; and if he will lay the Papers on this subject on the Table of the House.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): I have not yet received a

Report from the Government of India on the subject referred to in the hon. Member's Question.

Sir MANCHERJEE BHOWNAGGREE: Will the noble Lord ask the Government of India for an early statement on the subject?

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: I quite admit the importance of the subject and I have no doubt that the Government of India will report soon.

Red Sea Lights.

Sir J. FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.) I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the four new lights at the southern end of the Red Sea have been erected for several months; and, if so, what is the obstacle to their being utilised; and whether there is yet any prospect of a light being erected at the eastern end of the Gulf of Aden.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Gerald Balfour, Leeds, Central): The four new lights referred to have been erected, but the lighting has been delayed owing to a dispute to as the amount due for their construction. With regard to the proposed light at the eastern end of the Gulf of Aden I would refer my right hon. friend to the reply given by the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs on 11th November last to a question by the hon. Member for Ross and Cromarty.† That reply was to the effect that the shipping interests are not agreed in regard to the proposal, and that no settlement has been arrived at. There is no subsequent change in the situation. If my right hon. friend has any further questions to ask on this subject, perhaps he will put them to the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

Sir J. FERGUSSON: Are not the Board of Trade anxious to supply lights so much wanted for many years.

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR: It is well known that there is great difficulty in connection with these lights, involving much correspondence with the Foreign Office.

Railway Rates on Home Agricultural Produce.

Mr. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he is in a position to inform the House whether the question of railway rates is receiving his consideration; and whether he proposes at an early date to make a public statement upon this subject so far as it relates to the agricultural interests of the country.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of AGRICULTURE (Mr. Hanbury, Preston): The question of railway rates is, in my opinion, one of first-class importance to agriculturists, and I hope, as soon as I have completed inquiries which are now going on, to put myself into communication with the railway companies on the subject of the rates charged for home agricultural produce. As the hon. Member is probably aware, there is shortly to be a conference on this question in Wales which I hope to be able to attend.

Mr. HERBERT ROBERTS: It may be for the convenience of the House if I now state that in consequence of the assurance given by the right hon. Gentleman it is not my intention to move the Motion standing in my name for tomorrow evening.

Inspection of Danish and Dutch Bacon.

Mr. O'MARA (Kilkenny, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he has any official reports showing what inspection of Danish or Dutch bacon for trichinæ takes place in the country of exportation; and, if so, whether he will lay them upon the Table of the House.

Mr. HANBURY: In the case of Denmark regulations are in force under a law of 1897, which prohibits the exportation of swine flesh and other meat which has not been previously examined by an official veterinary inspector, and certified to be sound and fit for human consumption. No specific reference is, however, made to trichinosis. In Holland, trichinosis of swine is a scheduled disease under the Diseases of Animals Acts, and provision is made for the inspection of swine and swine flesh with a view to the detection of the disease. I should be happy to obtain copies of the Dutch and Danish laws and regulations and to supply them, with a translation, to the hon. Member, if desired.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxiv., 586.

Trichinæ in Imported Bacon and Pork.

MR. O'MARA: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he is aware that outbreaks of trichinosis among swine have lately taken place in Denmark and Holland; that bacon and pork from these countries have lately been condemned in Smithfield market as unfit for human food; and will he say whether he has any reports as to the danger of trichinæ in bacon to the public health; and what steps, if any, he proposes to take to prevent the importation of bacon infected with trichinæ into the United Kingdom.

MR. HANBURY: The last case of trichinosis in swine in Holland as to which we have any information occurred in 1900. We have observed no reports of the existence of the disease in Denmark. Pork of Dutch and Danish origin has recently been condemned in Smithfield market as unfit for food, mainly on account of the presence of tuberculosis, but no case of trichinosis has been discovered in the City markets for the past twenty years, although a special microscopic examination is made for the detection of trichinæ. It rests, however, with the Local Government Board, and not with myself, to take any further steps which may be considered necessary for the protection of the public health from the danger to which the hon. Member refers. I may state, however, that no case of trichinosis has been observed in this country for at least sixteen years.

New York Mail Service—Slow Steamers.

SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if his attention has been called to the fact that under the Transatlantic Combine the mid-week mail to New York has been carried for several weeks since the beginning of 1903 by the "Cedric," "Celtic," and "Cymric," vessels which cannot steam from Kingstown to New York in seven days even in the finest weather, so that it has been impossible of late to send replies by the steamer leaving New York on Saturday to letters which left by these boats on Wednesday in the previous week; and whether he will take steps to ensure that the conditions of the contract with the White Star Company shall be fulfilled as in previous years.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, Worcestershire, E.): I am aware that the three vessels mentioned have been employed in the mail service to New York when none of the faster steamers of the White Star Line have been available. I am assured that their use was due solely to the fact that the "Majestic" and "Teutonic" had been withdrawn for purposes of overhauling. The hon. Member will be glad to learn that it is the Company's intention to have their fastest steamers regularly running on the mail service after the 15th of this month. In ordinary conditions of weather, letters sent by the "Celtic" and "Cedric," sister ships, should be delivered at New York in time to admit of replies being sent by the Saturday mail.

Telegraphic Communication with Westray.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he is aware that for over two months the important island of Westray has been without telegraphic communication, and whether any steps are being taken to repair the cable.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The hon. Member has already called my attention to the interruption of the cable to Westray, and I have explained that the weather has not been suitable for repairing operations in those waters. In addition to this, the cable ship has had to go into dock; but she will shortly be ready for sea, and she will then proceed to the North to repair the Westray and other cables.

Children in State-aided Schools and Dentistry.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Board of Education, having regard to the fact that the Admiralty estimate that 10 per cent. of the recruits for the Navy are rejected on account of bad teeth, will he consider the expediency of arranging for dentists to visit State-aided schools so that the children of ten years and upwards may have facilities for obtaining advice as to the best means to be taken to preserve their teeth.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Sir WILLIAM ANSON, Oxford University): The Board will consider the propriety of communicating with local authorities on this subject, as it would appear to be one with which local authorities might most properly deal.

Glasgow Slums.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if he will explain why the sanitary conditions of the Public Health (Scotland) Act are not enforced in respect of slum property in Glasgow.

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): I cannot admit the hypothesis on which the hon. Member's Question proceeds. The Public Health Act in Glasgow, as elsewhere, is administered by the local authority under the supervision of the Local Government Board.

MR. WEIR: Very well, I will give the hon. and learned Gentleman information which will show that his information is wholly inaccurate.

Island of Lewis—Report on Social Condition.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the Secretary for Scotland is yet prepared to introduce legislation dealing with the suggestions contained in the Report on the Social Condition of the Island of Lewis.

*MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: The matter referred to in the hon. Member's question is now under the personal consideration of the Secretary for Scotland.

Dublin Divisional Magistrates.

MR. MOONEY (Dublin Co., S.): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland, whether he is aware that all prosecutions at the instance of the Rathmines and Rathgar Urban District Council have been dealt with by Mr. Thomas Chalmers Drury since his appointment as a divisional Magistrate of the Metropolitan District of Dublin; and whether, in view of the fact that this Gentleman prior to his appointment as divisional magistrate was standing council for the Rathmines and Rathgar Urban District Council, arrangements will be made for any future prosecutions at the instance of this council to be dealt with by some other magistrate.

*THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. ATKINSON, Londonderry, N.): There is no foundation for the statement contained in the Question, and, if possible, still less for the imputation apparently intended to be conveyed by it against an upright and efficient magistrate. Out of the fifty-eight days on which prosecutions of the nature mentioned came on for hearing, Mr. Drury presided on seventeen. The cases he dealt with came before him in the ordinary rotation of business and were adjudicated upon by him without objection by any of the parties interested. No change in the practice of the Court is in my opinion called for.

Disqualified Irish Councillors.

MR. CULLINAN (Tipperary, S.) I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he will grant the Return standing on the Paper to-day *re* Disqualification of County, District, and Urban Councillors in Ireland.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): I have forwarded to the hon. Member a return containing this information. I see no necessity, however, for laying it on the Table as a Parliamentary Paper.

Appended is the Return referred to in this Question:—

County and District Councillors (Ireland): Return giving the names and residences of the County, District, and Urban Councillors who have been disqualified from acting as such because of their being sentenced to terms of imprisonment with hard labour.

Irish Evicted Tenants.

MR. CULLINAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he will grant the

Return standing on the Paper to-day relating to evicted tenants in Ireland.

MR. WYNDHAM: Yes, Sir; the Return will be granted.

Appended is the Return referred to:—

Evicted Tenants (Ireland)—Return showing the number of Tenants evicted in Ireland within the past twenty-five years who have not been reinstated in their holdings, as follows: number under £10 yearly rent; number over £10 and under £20; number over £20 and under £50; number over £50 and under £100; number over £100 and under £200; number over £200.

Disqualification by Crimes Act Sentences.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if he will state the number of local representatives who were disqualified from acting on local representative bodies in Ireland in consequence of being sentenced to hard labour under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act since 1898.

MR. WYNDHAM: Fourteen.

National Library, Dublin.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the opinion of the Trustees of the National Library, Dublin, to which attention has again been called in the latest report, the completion of the east wing of the library can be carried out in accordance with the plans as originally approved of.

MR. WYNDHAM: It is not practicable to make provision for this work in the Estimates for the current year, which have already been published. But the whole question of the necessity for, and the amount of the additional accommodation recommended will be considered in connection with the Estimates for next year.

White Estate, near Bantry.

MR. GILHOOLY (Cork Co., W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the action of the receiver on the White Estate, near Bantry in serving a number of these tenants with civil bills for arrears due; and whether, in view of the position of these tenants, he will cause the immediate sale of the White Estate, which has been listed since 1898, in order that said arrears may be arranged in the purchase.

MR. WYNDHAM: Twelve tenants on this estate have been served with civil bills. The receiver, who is responsible to the land judge for any action he may take, states he has been impelled to take these proceedings because there is a disposition on the part of some of the tenants to withhold payment of rent pending the sale of the estate. In reply to the concluding inquiry, I must refer to my answer to the hon. Member's Question of Thursday last.†

Glengarriffe Burial Ground.

MR. GILHOOLY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the correspondence between the Bantry Rural District Council and the Irish Land Commission; and, if so, whether he will explain why the Land Commission, as the successors of the Church Temporalities Commission, refused to vest the Glengarriffe burial ground in the said district council in view of the Irish Church Act of 1869.

MR. WYNDHAM: I am making enquiries into this matter and will communicate to the hon. Member the result.

Select Committee on Irish Valuation.

MR. WOLFF (Belfast, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is the intention of the Government to re-appoint this session the Select Committee on Irish Valuation.

MR. WYNDHAM: Yes, Sir.

MR. WOLFF: When?

MR. WYNDHAM: On as early a date after the Recess as possible.

Margaretta Buoys, Galway Bay.

MR. JOYCE (Limerick): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can say on what date the change in the character of the Margaretta Buoys, Galway Bay, was made; and whether, seeing that the notice to mariners of the 1st November, 1897, stated that when the changes were carried out a further notice would be issued stating the fact, he will explain why that course was not taken with respect to the other buoys mentioned in the notice of November, 1897, and why, when the changes were made, the west buoy was marked by a triangle instead of a diamond and the east buoy by a diamond instead of a triangle.

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† See page 922.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I have communicated with the Commissioners of Irish Lights who state that the change in character of the Margaretta buoys was carried out on the 14th and 17th June, 1898. The Commissioners add that through an oversight a Notice to Mariners was not issued announcing the changes of these and other buoys alluded to in the notice of November, 1897. The sanction of the Trinity House for top marks of the Margaretta buoys was in accordance with the recommendations of the Buoyage Conference of 1st May, 1883, and the top marks are still carried by these buoys, viz., west buoy a diamond, and the east buoy a triangle.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Will the right hon. Gentleman say what notice was taken of this serious omission to notify the change in these buoys in the usual manner?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I have no power over the Irish Lights Board?

Straw Island, South Arran and Roancarrig Lights.

MR. JOYCE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will say on what dates Straw Island, South Arran, and Roancarrig Lights were brought into conformity with their description as given in the Admiralty Light List; and whether he can state in degrees to what exactitude the sectors of catoptric and dioptric lights can be cut.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I am informed by the Commissioners of Irish Lights that it is absolutely impossible to state the exactitude with which catoptric and dioptric lights can be cut, as asked for, until the actual conditions of each particular light are known. The Commissioners add that no alterations have been made in the cuts of either Straw Island, South Arran, or Roancarrig Lights.

Mr. Wyndham's Speech on the Irish Land Bill.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland a Question of which I have given him private notice, namely, whether the sum of £410,000 said by him to have been saved from the Irish Estimates during a period of three years has been placed to the credit of any Irish account.

*MR. WYNDHAM: I think I can reply to the hon. Member. The excellent report which appeared in *The Times* of the speech in which I introduced the Land Bill, contained an error which, I am sure, was due to myself and not to the reporter. What I was doing was this. I was comparing the amount of the civil government charges expended on the Irish Estimates in the year 1901–02 and the same amount for the year 1896–97, and I said, I believe quite accurately, that it was lower in the former year than in the earlier year. I made a parenthetical allusion to the fact that in three out of the intervening years there had been a decrease, but in the other two there had been an increase. These minor fluctuations in the Estimates are not matters which can be treated in the method which the hon. Member suggests. I was saying that we expected to make a reduction of £250,000 a year, and I pointed out that in recent years there had not been an increase but the reverse on the civil government charges in Ireland.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): But have the savings been devoted to any Irish purpose?

*MR. WYNDHAM: The hon. Member cannot have listened to what I said. On the three years there were savings amounting to £410,000, but on the other two years there were increases. Would the hon. Member suggest that the savings should be earmarked for Ireland, and the increases earmarked for Great Britain? The relations of the two countries cannot be conducted in that way.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: I am quite certain that that is what will be done.

Irish Gold Ornaments.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he will say in what position the case in reference to the Irish gold ornaments in the British Museum now stands.

The PRIME MINISTER and FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): I do not think I have anything to add to the answer I gave to a similar Question the other day, which was that the case would probably be tried in the course of the next sittings after Easter.†

Naval and Military Education.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he will take the opinion of the Committee of Defence on the possibility of making arrangements whereby the new director of naval education may also be charged with the direction of military education.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I will not offer any opinion as to whether this is or is not a proper subject to be dealt with by the Committee of Defence. That Committee is at present occupied with subjects far beyond the Departmental range suggested by the hon. Gentleman, and they certainly have not time to deal with this question at the present moment.

Royal Patriotic Commission.

Mr. KEARLEY (Devonport): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury when the Bill to deal with the future administration of the funds controlled by the Royal Patriotic Commission will be introduced.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I hope the Bill will be introduced very shortly.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury what business he contemplates taking on the days immediately after the holidays.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: On the Tuesday on which we return, in accordance with the almost invariable custom, we shall take Supply. I shall be very glad to state to-morrow what we shall take on the Wednesday.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Which Supply?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Civil Service Estimates. I will endeavour to make the Estimates on Tuesday as little controversial as possible. I cannot give the same pledge for the Wednesday. Both days will be allotted days.

THE VOTE OF CENSURE.

THE PENRHYN QUARRY DISPUTE.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I desire to ask the right hon. Gentleman a Question of which I have given him private notice, namely, whether he can give a day for the discussion of the Motion which stands in the name of my right hon. friend the Member for East Fife with regard to the Bethesda dispute.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I understand that the Motion is couched in the form of a Vote of Censure on the Government. Of course I shall give a day, and I shall make that day as convenient as I can for hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House. The Thursday after we return is devoted to the Budget, and I think the Monday following will be a convenient day.

POST OFFICE SITES BILL.

Ordered, That the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills do examine the Post Office Sites Bill with respect to compliance with the Standing Orders relative to Private Bills.—(*Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*)

NEW BILLS.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS (AUDIT) BILL.

"To amend the law relating to the audit of the accounts of Municipal Corporations in England and Wales," presented by Major Seely; supported by Sir James Fergusson, Sir Barrington Simeon, Mr. Galloway, and Mr. Flower; to be read a second time upon Monday, 27th April, and to be printed. [Bill 141.]

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† See page 780.

TRAWLERS' CERTIFICATES SUSPENSION BILL.

"To enable Courts to suspend the certificates of trawlers convicted of illegal trawling," presented by Mr. Bignold; supported by Mr. Irwin Cox, Mr. Leveson Gower, Mr. J. E. Gordon, and Mr. Cathcart Wason; to be read a second time upon Monday, 18th May, and to be printed. [Bill 142.]

PARLIAMENTARY VOTERS' REGISTRATION BILL.

"To amend the law for the Registration of Voters and other purposes pertaining to elections," presented by Mr. Cremer; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 21st April, and to be printed. [Bill 143.]

THE PORT OF LONDON.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): I rise to introduce a Bill "to establish a Commission for the administration of the Port of London, and for transferring to the Commission the undertakings of certain dock companies, and certain powers and duties of the Conservators of the River Thames and the Waterman's Company, and for other purposes connected therewith." This Bill is the outcome of the valuable comprehensive Report presented by the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the question of the administration of the Port of London. The Commissioners recommended that a new port authority should be created which should take over the powers and duties of the Lower Thames Conservancy, of the Waterman's Company, and of the Trinity House, so far as the duties and powers of the Trinity House relate to the Port of London. They recommended, in addition, that the new authority should purchase the undertakings of the principal dock companies—that is to say, the London and India Dock Company and the Surrey Commercial and Millwall Docks Companies—subject, however, to the obligation to lease or sell the warehouses belonging to those companies as soon as that could conveniently be done. They further recommended that, in order to bring the port up to modern requirements, the new authority should forthwith proceed to carry out extensive works in connection with the deepening of the river channel and with the improvement of the existing dock accommodation and the provision of further dock accommodation. They estimated the expenditure on the deepening of the river channel at a sum of £2,500,000, and the expenditure upon the docks at a sum of £4,500,000. Finally, they advised that the large financial commitment involved in these proposals should be met partly by empowering the new authority to raise dues upon the goods entering the port as well as upon the ships, partly by a municipal contribution to the expense of deepening the river, and partly by an issue of Port stock in payment of the undertakings of the dock companies, such Port stock to have behind it the guarantee of the London County Council and the Corporation of the City.

In its main outlines the Bill follows the recommendations of the Commission; but there are some not altogether unimportant exceptions which I will proceed briefly to indicate. In the first place, it is not proposed to include the powers and duties of the Trinity House among the powers and duties which are to be transferred to the new authority. It is generally admitted, I believe, that the Trinity House has done its work in connection with the Port of London well; and the Commissioners themselves seem to have recommended the transfer of its functions rather on the ground of abstract symmetry than in order to meet any practical complaint of the manner in which those functions have been discharged. Moreover, it appears to the Government on further inquiry into the subject that this transfer would have the effect of raising difficulties in connection with the lighting of the port and the pilotage quite out of proportion to any advantage likely to ensue from it. We have accordingly decided not to include Trinity House within the scope and operation of this Bill. The proposal to purchase the undertakings of the dock companies is undoubtedly a very far-reaching one—it is really the keystone of the scheme which has been put forward by the Royal Commissioners. After most careful consideration, and weighing as well as we were able the arguments for and against, we have come to the conclusion that the Commissioners were right in the importance which they attributed to this proposal. In one respect, however, we have been unable to agree with the recommendations of the Commissioners as to the purchase of the docks. As I have already stated, the Commissioners advise that the new authority should be placed under an obligation to dispose as soon as possible, or, at all events, within a stated time, of that part of the property of the dock companies which consists of warehouses. There appears to me to be a very great consensus of opinion, in which we also share, that that proposal is not a workable one. Accordingly we have decided to leave it open to the new authority either to dispose of the warehouses at present belonging to the dock companies or to retain them as they see fit. As regards the financial arrangements, our proposal differs in two respects from that made by the Royal Commission. The Royal Commission suggested that a municipal guarantee should be given jointly by the London County Council and the Corporation of the City. I understand that the Corporation of the City is not in a position to give such a guarantee; and accordingly the Government propose that it shall be given by the County Council alone. The Bill also provides for what appears not to have been contemplated by the Royal Commissioners—namely, that the debenture stock of the dock companies shall be compulsorily redeemable. We naturally take all precautions in the Bill that that shall be carried out without any injustice to the reasonable interests of the holders of debenture stock.

Lastly I come to the question of the constitution of the new port authority. With regard to this important point the scheme of the Bill differs materially from the scheme proposed by the Royal Commissioners. Under the scheme of the Royal Commissioners the port authority was to consist of forty members, fourteen of whom were to be elected and twenty-six nominated. We maintain the total number of forty, but we exactly reverse the proportions of elected and non-elected members—that is to say, we propose that twenty-six shall be elected and fourteen nominated. The constitution of the authority under our proposal will be as follows:—Appointed by the London County Council, eight; by the City Corporation, two; by the Admiralty, one; by the Board of Trade, one; Trinity House, one; and the Railway Association, one; elected by the payers of dues on ships, ten; by the payers of dues on goods—that is by the mercantile community—ten; by the wharfingers, four; and by the owners of river craft, two. It will be noted that under this scheme, while we very materially increase the number of the representatives of shipowners and the mercantile community, we very materially diminish the numbers of those who are to be appointed by the local authorities. I imagine that this change will be received with general favour, and that the only question that is likely to arise is a doubt as to whether the pecuniary interests of the London County Council, as the guaranteeing body, have been adequately secured under it. I may say that the Royal Commissioners themselves indicated their view that, apart from financial considerations, they would propose a smaller representation for the County Council and the Corporation of the City.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): They proposed eleven.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: That is so. I may, however, point out that the County Council cannot really be protected from financial incompetence on the part of the new authority unless they actually have a majority of members on the board; and that is, of course, absolutely out of the question. We have therefore to look in another direction for the protection of the interests of the ratepayers, which we fully admit they are entitled to. What we propose is that, if at any time the revenues of the port are insufficient to meet its obligations and the interest upon the Port Stock, and recourse has to be had to the guarantee, the County Council, as the guaranteeing body, shall be then entitled to move the Board of Trade, and the Board of Trade shall have power to make an order upon the dock authority fixing the dues upon goods and ships at such a rate as will make good any deficiency that may have arisen. I have now described, as briefly as I can, the principal provisions of the Bill; and I trust the House will be content to leave any further explanations or justification of the proposals that may be required to a future date, when hon. Members will have the text of the Bill in their hands. In conclusion I will only say that the problem presented to the Government has been by no means a simple one, and I myself, after devoting a great deal of attention to the subject, doubt whether any solution could be found that would be entirely free from objection. But the need for doing something is urgent; and, on the whole, I believe that the more the question is studied the more it will be recognised that a bold and thorough solution, such as that put forward by the Commissioners and substantially embodied in this Bill, will be the one most likely to lead to useful and fruitful results. I beg to move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to establish a Commission for the administration of the Port of London, and for transferring to the Commission the undertakings of certain dock companies, and certain powers and duties of the Conservators of the River Thames and the Watermen's Company, and for other purposes connected therewith."—(*Mr. Gerald Balfour.*)

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON said that in the few minutes open to them for discussion he did not propose to discuss the principles or details of the Bill. Before doing that they must have a copy of it in their hands. But speaking for himself, and on behalf, he hoped, of most hon. Members, he welcomed the action of the Government in dealing with this matter, and congratulated them upon the extraordinary promptitude with which they had carried out the recommendations of the Royal Commission, it being the rule for Governments to take a long time to consider such recommendations. In some respects he thought the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman improved upon the proposals of the Royal Commission, but in others it worsened them. He was very glad the right hon. Gentleman was going to base the financial operations on the credit of the rates, without which, in his opinion, it would have been quite impossible to carry them through, either in regard to the buying up of existing interests, or the raising of the new capital essential for the prosperity of the port. He was glad to think that the County Council, on behalf of the ratepayers of London, were to finance the undertaking. That was an improvement on the proposal of the Royal Commission to set up a sort of dual control. But with regard to the composition of the body which was to undertake the management of the docks, he heard with surprise and disappointment that they were to have only one-fifth of the whole representation on the new authority. The right hon. Gentleman proposed that if the new body got into financial difficulties, the County Council should be able to move the Board of Trade to move the dock trust to put up the rates. That was a most clumsy device. He hoped that in Committee they would insist that the County Council should have a fair representation on the authority, and then he would much rather leave it to those representatives to see that the interests of the ratepayers were preserved than, when the extremity had come, resort to the clumsy expedient of moving the Board of Trade. As to the exclusion of Trinity House from the purview of the Bill, while the House was agreed that the great confusion and chaos of authorities having jurisdiction on the river should be ended, if leaving Trinity House in its present position would not lead to that confusion he had no objection. He regarded this Bill as an earnest on the part of the Government that they wished to deal with this matter in a broad-minded and satisfactory way. There were one or two other points to which, on the Opposition side of the House, there would be considerable resistance, but as this matter was not one of party or politics, he trusted the right hon. Gentleman would leave it to be discussed and decided according to the general feeling of the Committee. He had heard it stated that the right hon. Gentleman proposed to send the Bill to the Grand Committee.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR said his proposal was that it should go to a joint Committee of Lords and Commons, as the Water Bill did last year.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: And it will then come back to this House and be discussed in Committee?

MR GERALD BALFOUR: As at present advised that is my intention.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON said this was clearly a matter which the House itself ought to have the opportunity of discussing, seeing that it dealt with a trade which represented £250,000,000 sterling yearly. Again he congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on having introduced the Bill, although of course they must wait till they had it in their hands before they could form an opinion as to whether it was a satisfactory measure.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER put the Question in pursuance of Standing Order No. 11.

Question agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Gerald Balfour and Mr. Bonar Law.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

"To establish a Commission for the administration of the Port of London, and for transferring to the Commission the undertakings of certain dock companies, and certain powers and duties of the Conservators of the River Thames and the Watermen's Company, and for other purposes connected therewith," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday 21st April, and to be printed. [Bill 144.]

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. URE (Linlithgowshire), in moving that no measure dealing with licensing reform in Scotland would be satisfactory which failed to include provisions securing direct popular control of the liquor traffic, said that in doing so he would not challenge the claim put forward by the Lord Advocate in introducing the Bill, viz., that it was an honest and fair attempt to tackle a ticklish question. The Bill had received approval from many quarters, in some cases under reservations more or less ample. The House would agree that any measure dealing with the liquor traffic proposed by any Government under any conceivable conditions would certainly fail to please everybody. Many of them thought that the Bill did not go far enough; some of them thought that it went too far; but they were all agreed that it was a step in the right direction. He was sure the Lord Advocate was sick of that phrase. He abominated it, because it was characteristic of countless statutory measures of social reform, which had perished at their birth. They lacked something which their authors seemed unable or unwilling to give them —a living force. They were all steps in the right direction, but steps which somehow or other did not seem to lead anywhere. He asked why a step? Why not a stride, or a series of strides? If they saw the path straight before them, and the goal on ahead, why should they not tread that path? He supposed they would be told that they must proceed warily, by slow steps, or else they would lose the support of the moderate man. He did not believe it. It was the influence of the moderate man that paralysed reform—the armchair politician, the weak brother, the man who laid low, and who looked wise and said nothing. He (Mr. Ure) was satisfied that temperance reform in Scotland had been delayed for more than a generation of men because of the unreasoning dread of this particular moderate man. He did not say anything of the opposition which the trade and their friends and supporters would undoubtedly give to a measure of temperance reform. He discounted it, he took it for granted, and he made no complaint of it. If he were a publican, or the son of a publican, he should fight to the last gasp for his vested interests. He would do this justice to the trade at all events.

Their position was quite frank and candid. A resolution passed at the conference of the Wine and Beer Trade Defence League at Sheffield on 28th March, 1900, made their position plain and unmistakable. When he found a highly respectable brewer in Edinburgh talking of a pistol being put to their heads, he was speaking simply of the inoffensive Bill they were discussing; and when they found a respectable licensed grocer from the constituency of the Leader of the Opposition suggesting that he should hustle his Member if he did not do what he was told—all he would say was that the House had no complaint to make of plain speaking. They knew exactly where the trade stood. But he made a request, and one only, and he supposed it would be readily granted. It was that the trade would not expect them to discuss again *de novo* the arguments for and against direct popular control. They must maintain the possibility of making a man sober by Act of Parliament. Why did he affirm that the Bill was unsatisfactory and inadequate and fell short of wha they were entitled to expect? Brushing aside all Committee points, such as later openings and earlier closings, extinction of the licensed grocer or the separation of his grocery business from that of the sale of alcoholic liquor, he affirmed that the Bill was unsatisfactory and inadequate because it was in the main a police measure and nothing more, strengthening, no doubt, and enlarging, the powers of the police authorities to put down drunkenness, but not even touching, not even professing to touch, that vast social and national question connected with the drink problem. It did not even touch the fringe of it.

When they considered the appalling dimensions of the problem which confronted them, the provisions of this Bill seemed almost ludicrously inadequate. He would not cull selected passages from the writings or speeches of teetotal lecturers or preachers. He did not turn even to the Minority Report, but he referred to a document which no man in that House would say exaggerated in any degree the extent of the mischief. After making every allowance for the zeal of countless temperance reformers, for the spread of education, the taste for writing, the passion for games and athletics, the Majority Report of the Royal Commission went on to say—

> "It is undeniable that a gigantic evil still remains to be remedied, and hardly any sacrifice would be too great which would result in a marked diminution of this national degradation."

What did this Bill do to deal with that gigantic evil; how did it seek to alleviate the national degradation? The habitual drunkard would be blacklisted, but he would have by way of compensation for his compulsory abstention from alcohol the joy of knowing that his portrait would adorn the walls of the scenes of his former revels. The licensed grocer had got to sell his wares in sealed or closed vessels. The *bonâ-fide* traveller was a thorough-paced humbug, for no one who wanted to walk wanted to tipple, and no one who wanted to tipple wanted to walk, and the man who wanted to do both was a pure figment of the licensing laws. Clubs, if they sold drink, were to be put upon a register. That, stripped of the necessary wording in an Act of Parliament, was a brief statement of the measure so far as it proposed to deal with the gigantic evil of national degradation.

Part I. of the Bill dealt with the reconstitution of the licensing authority. He did not brush lightly aside by any means the proposal to reconstitute these licensing authorities; especially when he saw the very ample powers with which they were in future to be armed. What did it come to in the end? It was more than likely that there would be an appeal, and a gnashing of teeth on the part of at least forty odd Royal Burghs, whose ancient privileges were to have ruthless hands laid upon them by the Lord Advocate. He, in company with his right hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition, shared a sympathetic ear with the Provost of South Queensferry and the Provost of Linlithgow when the Lord Advocate proposed to deprive them of their ancient right to supplant and uproot public houses within their own burghs at their own free will. After all, what did this amount to? It was mere mechanism—mere machinery. What was its real value in the Bill? Was the Lord Advocate's proposal to limit the number, and make definite the constitution of these licensing boards, to secure continuity of policy, and a sense of responsibility which they looked for in vain in promiscuous and fluctuating gatherings of men? He had no doubt that the controversy would be prolonged and very bitter; but did they not all know, as practical men, that when the conflict had subsided, and when the smoke had cleared away, A, B, and C, who were nominated to do a certain thing before, would be elected to do that very same thing.

What the Bill lacked was driving power, vital energy, and living force to cope with this gigantic evil, and to alleviate the national degradation. He proposed to give flesh and life and living force to this measure—not mere machinery with nothing to drive it; and he proposed to look for his motive power at the very root of the gigantic evil, and at the very seat of the national degradation. He proposed to look among the people themselves, whose lives were so very closely bound up with this evil. He proposed to find the people on the widest possible existing franchise. He did not propose absolute prohibition; he did not propose management either by the local authority or by a company from which the element of private profit was to be altogether eliminated; he did not propose a reduction of the number of public houses in any locality in the ratio of population. What he did propose was that the people, to whom this was not a mere matter of academic discussion, but in many instances a matter of life or death, should be left themselves to choose which of these remedies they thought best adapted to the localities in which they lived. He proposed that the limitations under which the people should apply the remedy should be clear and definite, and should be as few as possible, because flexibility and freedom were essential to his plan, and uniformity and rigidity fatal. The needs of one locality were totally different from the needs of another in variety and distribution of population, and in economical and industrial conditions. To ask the people in any locality to give an answer "Yes" or "No," if it were to be prohibition alone, management alone, or reduction of licences alone, would usually mean that they would have no answer at all to the question. Freedom and flexibility he regarded as absolutely essential. He did not believe that on the application of the remedy would instantly come the remedy, as no one knew what the people in any given locality might say. What he asked was that those who were most deeply interested, and, therefore, had the best right to consider and decide the question, should get a chance of saying what the remedy might be, and how they proposed to mitigate this national degradation. He proposed to give to the people themselves exactly the right which the law of Scotland gave to every landed proprietor in the country, exactly the right which the law gave to magistrates in however insignificant a Royal Burgh—if there was an insignificant Royal Burgh—exactly the same right that the nominees of the Lord-Lieutenant of the county at the present moment exercised.

The arguments were all contained in the Minority Report of the Royal Commission under eleven heads; and under eleven heads also would be found the objections to direct popular control. Two of the eleven objections were applicable exclusively to prohibition; the other nine to popular control. It would be asked were the people of Scotland in favour of direct popular control; and were they ready to undertake the duty and responsibility of deciding this question, in which they were so deeply and vitally interested. He believed they were; but he would not make an unqualified assertion on the subject, as the people of Scotland had not yet been polled on it. Small blame to them. It was no fault of the Opposition, because the last time they went to their constituents there was only one question submitted to them, and electors were told that every vote given to members of the Opposition was a vote given to their enemies in the field. When he came to the Majority Report he found silence on this subject; and there was not a word to indicate whether his countrymen were in favour of this measure or not. The Minority Report, on the other hand, was clear and unhesitating in saying that Scotland was now ready for a wide measure of direct popular control. He had read and re-read every word of the evidence on the subject. The Solicitor-General, who gave most valuable and distinct evidence before the Committee, would find, when he turned up the Index, only one reference under the head of

"Objections to Direct Popular Control." That was in the evidence of the Chief Constable of Greenock; but even he had no objection to the plan of direct popular control he had just sketched. The Chief Constable's objection was to prohibition pure and simple, and what he desired with regard to prohibition was magisterial discretion tempered by local control. Out of the 10,000 answers given by Scottish witnesses before the Royal Commission, he challenged any man to produce any answer which was hostile to direct popular control such as he had sketched. The last time the question of prohibition came forward in this House, forty Scottish Members voted in favour of it and fifteen against. If he were asked what tests they had of the feeling of the people as distinct from their representatives, he would offer two. Dundee, sixteen years ago, had an opportunity of declaring its opinion, and there were nine to two in favour of direct popular control, three to two in favour of prohibition, seven to two in favour of the reduction of licences, and seven to four against any new licences being granted. The great city of Glasgow, which the Solicitor-General would not deny was the embodiment of the collective wisdom of Scotland, had this opportunity a few years later; and by a majority of 77,000 odd against 8,508 declared in favour of direct popular control; and by a majority of 87,000 against 19,000 declared in favour of prohibition.

He must own that his scheme was incomplete and impracticable if it led to the conclusion that a publican of unimpeachable character, who had managed his business without complaint, might suddenly, as the result of the exercise of one of these options, be deprived of business and turned loose on the world with probably a wife and family dependent upon him. Such a conclusion would probably be fatal to any scheme of direct popular control. Vested interests in licences were in Scotland not comprehended. Any limitation upon the absolute, unqualified, unchallengeable right on the part of magistrates and licensing justices to exercise discretion in gradually reducing licences equally he did not understand. Again, compensation in the strict and narrow sense of the word, the proposal to dip their hand into the ratepayers' pockets in order to hand over money to a dispossessed publican was to a Scotsman simply grotesque. But Scotsmen clearly recognised that the people had legalised this trade, and they saw every day that publicans whose conduct had been unimpeachable had, as a matter of course, their licences renewed. In reliance on this inveterate practice the publicans had embarked considerable sums — oftentimes the savings of a lifetime — in the purchase of licensed businesses. The law had recognised this practice, but it did not ask the publican to appear in Court every time his licence was renewed. They saw quite well that it would be unjust and inequitable to suddenly deprive that man of his livelihood for no fault of his own. Consequently they recognised the justice of giving him a long time notice to quit, and if they did not give him that notice they recognised the justice of giving him money compensation in lieu thereof. They said it was wholly unjust, impracticable and utterly impossible for even the strongest Government to propose to take compensation money out of the pockets of the ratepayers, and they looked, as logical men, for the source of such money payment to the gigantic monopoly which belonged to the people, which they had created and which they had handed over, almost gratuitously, to the publican. An hon. Member proposed seven years as the time notice to be given. He could assure him that the most zealous temperance reformers would not squabble with him about the number of years notice. At this stage there was no room for doubt or difference. He supposed the House would agree that licensed property would probably reach its high water mark in the great city of Glasgow. There twice over within his own knowledge, and within the experience of the Solicitor-General for Scotland the question of the market value of licensed property had been decided by trained lawyers, and the result was that in one case seven and a half years purchase, and in another case eight years purchase, of the net profits were awarded. There was therefore not very much room for difference of opinion, but never again would pure points of detail be allowed to divide the energies and paralyse the hands of temperance reformers, who had not read aright the history and lessons of the last twenty years if they did not see that in order to gain their main end, viz., control on the part of the people, they must set a great many minor issues in the background. The right hon. Member for East Fife once said in Edinburgh to a zealous band of temperance reformers that the history of this question was a history of lost opportunities. He entirely agreed with that statement, and he would regret to think that this, in one sense probably the most favourable opportunity which had ever been afforded to the House of Commons, of securing the right of popular control, should be lost. The Lord Advocate had in that Chamber a steady, sure, and firm majority which would enable him to beat down all his foes. The Government which survived the publication of the Spion Kop despatches, which came up with its majority smiling and triumphant after that long persistent attack on its flank and rear which characterised the opening weeks of the Session, was far more than equal to the Lord Advocate's modest enterprise of giving his countrymen an opportunity of applying their practical sagacity to the solution of a problem, difficult he admitted, but not insoluble, which so closely touched the future of his countrymen. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out all the words from the word 'That,' to the end of the Question, and add the words 'no measure dealing with Licensing reform in Scotland will be satisfactory which fails to include provisions securing direct popular control of the liquor traffic.'"—(*Mr. Ure.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. EUGENE WASON (Clackmannan and Kinross) formally seconded the Motion.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (MR. SCOTT DICKSON, Glasgow, Bridgeton) said he should treat the question as he thought the people of Scotland intended to deal with it, viz., as a practical matter. No doubt the Lord Advocate, as well as himself, had received almost innumerable petitions and requests from all classes of people in Scotland, temperance and otherwise, to support the Bill as it stood, subject no doubt to possible Amendment in Committee, but he had not received a single suggestion that he or any one should support the Amendment of the hon. Member for Linlithgow. With one consent all Scotsmen desired this Bill to pass, and they quite recognised that the Amendment was distinctly a Second Reading Amendment. It went to the principle of the Bill, and he might paraphrase a now famous saying:—"Every Vote for this Amendment is a Vote against the Bill." Apart from pressing the Amendment to a division there was a legitimate reason for bringing it before the House. While they in proposing the Bill quite recognised they did not go so far as many desired, on the other hand they understood perfectly that those on both sides of the House who were more advanced than the Bill did not intend by accepting it to commit themselves against going further. Therefore he agreed that it was quite legitimate that such an Amendment should be proposed in order to make it perfectly plain that whatever might be the good wishes towards the Bill it was not to be regarded from that standpoint as a settlement of the question. The Government might congratulate themselves on the manner in which the Bill had been received. No doubt it was recognised that on many important points, questions for discussion and amendment would be raised in Committee, and no doubt the Lord Advocate would listen to all suggestions with care and consideration, and in some cases, with sympathetic and friendly consideration. But that was an entirely different matter from adopting the Motion now submitted to the House. It would serve little good purpose to discuss the merits of local option, because that had been discussed over and over again in that House, until the question had almost assumed the character of the "hardy annual." But so far as he remembered, it had never received the assent of that House in any shape or form, and while it was an interesting subject of discussion so long as private Members toyed with it, it had had most disastrous results when taken up by a responsible Minister of the Government. I am sure the right hon. Gentleman for West Monmouthshire will not think I desire to make a merely personal point against him. In 1895, when the then Leader of the House introduced a Bill in favour of local option, Sir Wilfred Lawson, who then represented Cockermouth, congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on his courage, and hoped he would have his reward. That reward was given by the electors of Derby at the General Election in July, 1895, who thereby showed that local option was not regarded with favour even in England.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.): It had nothing whatever to do with it.

MR. SCOTT DICKSON said that according to the public prints it had a great deal to do with it. But he did not desire to press the point further than to say that it was much easier for a private Member to make such a proposal than for a Government to take it up. The people of Scotland might be in favour of some aspects of local option, but local option coupled with compensation would in many quarters meet with no favour at all. Such a proposal was an entirely novel one, and had never been submitted to the popular voice; therefore the statistics given by the hon. and learned Member were quite beside the question. Even the Minority Report of the Royal Commission did not go so far as the hon. and learned Member put it, because the farthest they went was to say that at the end of the given period—five years—a wide measure of direct popular control might be applied under proper safeguards to Scotland and Wales. That was a very different thing from saying, as he understood the Amendment to say, that no measure would be satisfactory which did not at once provide for direct popular control. In this Bill the Government made a large provision for increasing—he would not say the direct popular control, but for increasing the popular voice with regard to licensing questions. While he agreed at once that they were fundamentally at variance with the Motion so far as it proposed direct popular control, the House should not forget that they were making a large advance on anything that had hitherto been done. In the ordinary courts of the counties one-third of the members were to be taken from the County Councils. That was not direct popular control, but it was the very same control as the hon. and learned Member for Dumfries desired to keep in the smaller burghs. In the Appeal Courts the popular element was to be introduced by one-third of the members being appointed from the Town Council, As to whether the proportions should be two-thirds of justices and one-third of county councillors, he was aware that the two reports differed, but, personally, without in any way pledging his right hon. friend, he thought that was a very small matter which could fittingly be considered and decided in Committee. The House should treat this question, not as a subject for theoretical discussion but as a matter of practical politics. To load the Bill with local option and compensation would wreck the measure. It would be impossible to carry for Scotland—and he doubted whether it could be done even for Wales — a Licensing Bill embodying the principles of local option and compensation. Therefore, as practical politicians, hon. Members should ask themselves whether it would not be the wiser course to accept the Bill as it stood, subject to the consideration of proper amendments in Committee.

It was not at all a party question. Not a few Members on the Government side of the House heartily sympathised with the views advocated by the hon. and learned Member for Linlithgow. But the question was not what might be thought proper in some ulterior stage, but what at the present day, as a matter of ordinary commonsense legislation, was likely to pass with a view to the promotion of temperance and the prevention of drunkenness, and the evils attendant thereon. Reference had been made to compensation. He did not understand what compensation was unless it was full compensation. A man could not be given as compensation less than the value of that which was being taken from him. But the questions of what should be the proper compensation, how the amount should be arrived at, whence it was to come, or the form local option or local veto should take—all these questions were not pertinent at present; they were not before the House as practical questions, and he desired to reserve his opinion upon them. He hoped he had not unduly pressed his own or the Government standpoint. The Bill had been received with a large measure of approval, and he did not wish to say anything to change public feeling in that respect. The political opponents of the Government had been more than fair in the way they had spoken of the Bill; he welcomed the reception which had been given to it, but, recognising that the Amendment struck at the principle of the measure, and that if carried it would mean the loss of the Bill, the Government had no alternative but to oppose the Motion which had been made.

MR. THOMAS SHAW (Hawick Burghs) agreed with the view that the carrying of the Amendment would mean the loss of the Bill, and that as practical men they ought to look at the fate of the Bill in considering the Amendment. The Solicitor-General had appealed to the House to deal with the matter as practical men. As a practical man, then, he desired to ask what would be the attitude of the Government in the ulterior stages to which the hon. and learned Member had referred. Supposing it were discovered in Committee that the views of Scotland were altogether favourable to increasing the popular control in a practical sense, would they, viewing the matter with the desire to accede to Scottish opinion, yield to those views, or would they stand to the Bill? In his opinion of temperance measures he was largely guided by the view taken by the publicans. For instance, if they regarded a Bill as a pistol presented to their heads, he thought the Bill on the whole must be a fairly good one, and he, for one, would not vote for the present Amendment in order to make that pistol miss fire. He entirely accepted the view of the Government that in voting against the Amendment hon. Members would not be committing themselves against further progress. He was in favour of popular control and allowing the community to work out their own destiny in all these matters. It was a frequent truism that Scotland was in advance of England in temperance legislation, but there was not much sign of that truism in the present Bill. In the first place they had not had this Bill in advance of England but following the legislation of last year, and there was not much sign of advance on the merits of the legislation, for in the provisions of this Bill they found that they were substantially left in Scotland where England was put by the measure of last year. In Scotland for fifty years they had had early closing and Sunday closing. In Scotland they made an improvement with regard to early closing in the year 1887. One of the advances they had made was upon the practical topic of early closing in large towns, and in order to keep Scotland really in advance that subject might have been handled in this Bill. That much-needed reform had been passed over without a word. He hoped an Amendment would be placed on the Paper to give the Government a chance of showing whether they were practically in accord with the opinion of Scotland upon this subject. He welcomed this Bill and thanked the Government for it, but he trusted that for once the Government would not be bound hand and foot by the provisions of this measure, but would give effect in the Bill to the opinion of the majority of Scotch representatives. If that course were taken they would at the end make a good Bill of it, and even in the direction of popular control they would make a very considerable advance, if, without fear and trepidation, the Government would listen to the constitutionally expressed opinion of the Scotch Members upon this eminently Scottish affair.

He wished to say one or two words with regard to what he thought were grave omissions from this measure. Viewed in the light of the standard of the measure of last year, he submitted to his two hon. and learned friends opposite that it was a grave omission that in the Scotch Bill no provisions had been introduced upon the question of separation between husband and wife. In the English measure of 1902, this separation order might be granted by a County Court judge upon an application which substantiated the fact that the wife or husband was guilty of habitual drunkenness, and the wife could get separation and aliment if the husband was guilty of desertion, cruelty or neglect. By the English Act that had been done, but why should it not be done also with regard to Scotland? He recognised that there were certain technical difficulties in the way—questions of jurisdiction if they liked, but he was perfectly sure that if his two hon. and learned friends opposite would address themselves to solving this little technical trouble they could do it in twenty minutes. He would put to them this proposition. Why should they not put a little clause in this Bill making it the law of the land that habitual drunkenness on the part of husband or wife should be held equivalent in Scotch law to cruelty, and giving the same remedy as now obtained in the case of cruelty, and granting separation and alimony accordingly. That was a perfectly simple matter, and all questions of jurisdiction might be reserved. He was quite sure that if the Government addressed themselves to this little reform, it might be in many instances in Scotland a reform of very grave importance in family life. There was no remedy for chronic drunkenness in the home at all, unless that chronic drunkenness was accompanied by extreme brutality. They recognised that one of the most serious social evils was the continued existence of habitual drunkenness producing poverty and misery, and he submitted that the Government might look at this matter with some degree of sympathy and introduce this little reform which would be good for the household, for the children, and also for the habitual drunkard himself. He thought that omission might surely be remedied.

The second omission was in regard to not including the larger burghs in the Early Closing Clause. He knew nothing sadder than the record of legislative delay in regard to the way Scotland had been treated in this matter. In the year 1887 Sir Charles Cameron passed his little Bill giving the power of early closing to all local communities, and in the other House a provision was inserted that towns over 50,000 population should not have the power of closing at ten o'clock but only at eleven. That was sixteen years ago. A Royal Commission had reported in favour of a deletion of that proviso, and here they were to-day with nothing done in this direction even in a practical Bill for Scotland. This was a deplorable exhibition of lassitude on the part of a strong Government, with a united country, practically, at their back upon this subject. Therefore, he hoped Amendments would be introduced, and that upon this subject substantial progress would be made. Passing from the omissions he came to almost a graver matter, namely, the very serious error in some of its provisions. The first was in regard to the composition of the Court, or licensing authority. He did not know why the Government had deserted the word "authority" in favour of "court." The situation with regard to the licensing authority in Scotland was that they were set up in 1828. Since that time they had had the Reform Bill, they had set up local authorities, and they had had a Conservative Government passing Bills for the institution of County Councils. Nevertheless in the year 1903 they seemed to be tied hand and foot to the old idea of local government. They still had a Court set up consisting of the nominees of the Lord Lieutenant, because in 1828 there was no other public body known to the law to whom this work could be committed. Why should they hang on to an antiquated procedure of that kind? Why should they not rather acknowledge the institution of new representative bodies? Surely this Government ought to acknowledge them with all the more favour, because they themselves were responsible for the setting up of County Councils all over Scotland. The Solicitor-General for Scotland had spoken of the popular control set up by this Bill, but it was simply popular control according to Unionist ideas. Popular control, whether it be in connection with the Voluntary Schools in England, or in connection with licensing authorities or the Water Boards, was a popular control in which the popular element was controlled. It was popular control in which the popular element was steadily outvoted by two to one, and accordingly he could not see why His Majesty's Government should have any hesitation, except that the facts were against them, in using the term "popular control." His hon. and noble friend the Secretary for Scotland went to Scotland some time ago and defended the Voluntary Schools in England on the grounds that they were set up with downright popular control. He supposed in the same sense this was downright popular control which was being given to the licensing authorities; that was to say, it was not popular control at all, except that every popular representative had the fine prospect before him that, upon every question of importance, and notably upon the question of granting licences in the district he represented, he would always be steadily outvoted by two to one. He hoped an Amendment would be placed upon the Paper with regard to this point, so that the balance of power might be transferred to the popular element. He did not see why the justices should be included in this matter at all. If the question affected the well-being of the community, he did not see why those who represented the people should not fully control the granting of licences. This matter of the drink traffic was very closely connected with the question of police regulation, and the ratepayers were interested because they paid the police rate, and it was therefore a ratepayers' question. The local representatives were interested because they administered the police rate, and upon this point he wished to give an illustration by quoting the opinion of Mr. Arthur Sherwell upon the drink question in Scotland, who in his recently published book on "The Drink Peril in Scotland," said—

> "The closeness of the relation between intemperance and crime has become a truism, but it is nowhere more clearly demonstrated than in the criminal statistics of Scotland. Take the single fact that out of a total of 179,821 persons charged with criminal offences in 1900, no fewer than 114,207, or 63½ per cent., were for offences directly connected with drinking."

Again, he said—

> "If we turn to the prison statistics, the same truth of the close relation which exists between intemperance and crime is brought out with appalling emphasis. The statements made by a great number of men and women who have come into prison convicted of serious crimes have convinced the Commissioners 'that the majority (probably 66 per cent. at least) of such cases are closely connected with, and have their real explanation in, alcoholism.'"

If that point was clear in regard to the relation of police regulations to the licensing question, he wanted to know why it was that the ratepayers who had to pay the police rate, and those representatives who had to administer the police rate, should not be fully and completely charged with this matter of social order which was so intimately connected with the police of the district. He had no doubt whatever that there were representatives of the smaller burghs in this House who would have something to say as to whether this was an increased measure of popular control. Forty-eight of these Royal Burghs had their licensing authority at once rudely swept away by this Bill, and he should be interested to know what the opinion of those fine old burghs, such as that represented by his hon. and learned friend the Member for the Dumfries district, was of this proposal, which was for the first time in their history to deprive them of this vital element of local Government, namely, the regulation of the drink traffic in their midst. Then, again, if it were outside of these little burghs he hoped they would have very little of the county idea as such. The wider they made the area of representation, *ipso jure* the less actually these representatives felt the real pinch and trouble of the question they had to deal with. In the case of a small and limited district, he for one would be willing to entrust the County Councillors of that district alone with full and unlimited power for the regulation of licensing, but, in any view, what defence could be offered for taking the representatives of those districts and putting them in a permanent minority upon a matter of local government, so requiring local knowledge, so requiring intimate acquaintance with the subject, and even with the persons that came before them—what defence could be offered for putting these representatives in a perpetual statutory minority? He would go so far as to say this, that if this House denied direct popular control in the sense in which he had argued it, either by complete, or, at least, preponderating popular control, this House was only playing with the drink peril, and was simply making free with the representative principle, by loyalty to which they had the best protection for the community against the perils of the drink traffic.

The next terror in this Bill was with regard to the Courts of Appeal. He owned that he was totally against Courts of Appeal. He did not see why, if they had a true representative body, they had any right whatever to go to another body with a mixture of non-representative element, and to make an appeal from those who were responsible to those who did not know, and who were not responsible. That was what the Court of Appeal meant. Why was there a provision in the Bill that a majority of the Court of Appeal should be always nominated persons—Justices of the Peace? Why should there be what would be considered practically an insult—that the representatives of the communities on the Court of Appeal should always be placed in the proportion of one against two? Besides, in some cases, this was an entirely reactionary measure, because at present in the Courts of Appeal and the Confirmation Courts the burghs were represented in the proportion of half and half, but under this Bill it was proposed to change that, and to make a worse Court of Appeal than before. Under the name of a practical love for popular control they were to change that half and half proportion, under which the representatives of the people had an equal vote, and to make the proportion one against two.

There were two points to which he wished to direct the attention of the Lord Advocate with respect to the drafting of the Bill. He thought the provision with respect to the hawking of liquor was a most excellent one. There had been great scandals in Scotland, and notably at public works, such as water works, remote from the centres of supply, by the abuse of hawking. But with regard to hawking, might he point out that in the drafting of this Bill it would be possible for a grocer to enter a large number of names in his book, say of the navvies engaged on a particular work, with a certain allowance for each of them, because in this Bill there was no provision for a previous order from the individual customer. In fact, a grocer might enter the entire number of employees in a public work in his book, and in this way, instead of preventing hawking, they would be merely regularising it. He said, with some knowledge of these licensing questions, that great astuteness was sometimes shown by a licence holder in disentangling himself from statutory provisions and in finding a way, if possible, of depriving the Court of the power of giving effect to the intention of the statute. With regard to clubs he rejoiced very much, and he heartily thanked the Government for the provisions in the Bill. That was a great evil in Scotland, and he was glad that a remedy had been found for it. But there was, notwithstanding the precedent of the English Bill, one point that his right hon. friend the Lord Advocate might look into. There were excellent provisions for clubs being, so to speak, disentitled to carry on business, and for their being struck off the list of registered clubs if they did not carry on their business as real *bonâ fide* clubs, but there was no provision in the Bill of a similar good kind with regard to the institution of these clubs. They seemed to have a statutory right to come into being, and to have their existence continued as long as, and until they were found contravening the Act of Parliament. It appeared to him that it would be wiser that the Legislature should make some provision before a club came into existence, rather than that a club should run the gauntlet of administrative procedure to put it down. He hoped that point would be made clear in Committee. He was not altogether objecting to the Bill. He thought rather they should try to correct the errors and to fill up the omissions. The Bill was good in its provisions with relation to hawking and clubs. He thought it was bad with regard to the authority it set up. On the whole he would welcome it rather than do nothing. Legislation would not touch the real root of this mischief. It would go a little way. They could not altogether say with regard to any legislative measure on this subject that it would provide a panacea. He thought the root of the mischief lay deeper. He regretted to find that amidst all the recent years of our prosperity as a people this curse had dogged our footsteps. Mr. Sherwell put it thus—

> "There is a rise in drunkenness of 550, equal to 72 per cent., and also in breaches of the peace and petty assaults of 996, equal to 78·4 per cent. The latter are, we understand, caused almost entirely by intemperance. Good trade and high wages among the working classes are no doubt chiefly responsible for the increase in drunkenness and disorder."

Dr. Clouston had said—

> "Only a few of us preach teetotalism to all men, or total prohibition, or any other such strong measure. But from our experience in practice, our knowledge of human nature in

its dual relationship of body and mind, and its hereditary weaknesses, doctors are able to speak with authority in regard to the diseases—potential and actual, present and future—which the excessive consumption of drink is causing in our population. A consumptive race might conceivably be absolutely cured in two generations, or even in one, by good conditions. I do not believe that a drink-sodden race could be fully cured in a hundred years."

That was the defence of all this legislation. It was that they desired to take up the cause of this drink-sodden residuum of the population, to give the population itself the power of dealing legislatively, by such preventive measures as it could, with the temptations which were afforded under our present system to such a residuum, to destroy all those temptations, to lift and elevate society, to make better surroundings, and to give force to personal example. All these things must combine, but on the whole this Bill was to be welcomed firstly as a recognition of the gravity of the evil; and secondly, in some of its provisions as a helpful step forward.

*MR. SHAW-STEWART (Renfrew, E.) proposed to deal with one or two points raised by the hon. Member who moved the Amendment. It was contended by him that his scheme possessed the virtues of flexibility and freedom, but he would like to ask what freedom or flexibility there was in prohibition? If the Amendment were adopted they must inevitably adopt as one of the alternatives the power of localities voting for prohibition in particular districts. That element of prohibition would largely tell against the advantage of the hon. Member's proposal. Prohibition would be a vital disadvantage. It would for instance, compel a certain number of people living in a district where local sale was prohibited to crowd into another district where licensing obtained. That would be a very great evil. Secondly, it would encourage the formation of bogus clubs, which was one of those evils they all desired to put an end to. Thirdly, localities, after adopting prohibition for a certain number of years, might, and probably would, reverse their policy. That had been done in America and Canada, where the pendulum had swung from one extreme to the other. That would tell against the interests of temperance. A steady and careful reduction of licences throughout the country in cities and in counties would be a far better scheme for promoting a steady improvement in the drinking habits of the people than any proposal which contained the element of prohibition. That was why he and other Members on that side of the House could not possibly vote for the Amendment. The right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down thanked the Government for their Bill. He wished to join in those thanks. He thought they were all grateful to the Government for having thus early dealt with temperance reform in Scotland in this Session.

There was one point which they had omitted, and for this he expressed strong regret. They had not attempted to deal with the question of compensation, even after the experience the Government had had in regard to the English Bill, and what had occurred since the passing of that measure. They had seen in England a considerable reduction of licences for no breach of the law. It was said that it was impossible for the Government or anybody else to have foreseen such a state of things, but he maintained that those who had watched public opinion might and ought to have seen that there had been for some time past a steady determination in the country to have a more careful regulation of the liquor traffic, and amongst other methods which public opinion had lately emphasised was the reduction in the number of licences. If that reduction by a local authority occurred in England it was certain to occur in Scotland, especially after the passing of this Bill. By setting up a new authority for dealing with licences, the Government showed that a more careful regard ought to be had to the granting and the control of licences. In the present state of public opinion, what would inevitably result but a desire to reduce the number of public houses by withholding certificates from the worst kind of public houses? The local authorities in Scotland would find themselves in a difficulty. On the one hand they would be averse to withholding certificates from a poor individual, while it was probably the class of house held by people not of great substance which required to be withdrawn. But the local authorities would not like to turn out a poor man or woman and sacrifice his or her capital. They would have to choose between injustice to the individual and injustice to the general public. The only way in which that difficulty could be met was by a well-considered scheme of compensation. He did not see why a scheme of that sort would be so very difficult to pass this session of Parliament, because the difficulties were not insuperable. Once they established such a scheme, the licensing authorities would not be slow to withhold certificates from the worst kind of houses, which had committed no breach of the law but which did not carry on business in a very satisfactory manner. Therefore, from the point of view of temperance, he urged this matter of compensation. He also urged it from the point of view of justice to the publican—to the trade. After all the publican was not outside the pale of fair play. The trade was carried on under great difficulties. There were so many points of law to attend to and dangers to guard against, that it must be very difficult to conduct licensed premises in a proper and respectable manner at all. Why should they not treat the publican and licence holder as they treated any other trade, namely, on fair and equitable lines? It was true that the licence holder held his certificate from year to year, but when he died the Inland Revenue charged the licence, the property and the goodwill of the business at an enhanced value, which arose from the likelihood of the business being continued. He also urged compensation from the standpoint of public advantage. If they harassed the trade and permitted it to be carried on on a sort of chance principle, depriving a man of his licence without compensation, they would drive out of the trade the best men and would keep in it the very men who conducted their business in the worst way. He thought that after a term of years which could easily be decided upon, during which compensation should be given, the licences should only be from year to year, and if that were so there would not be so much paid in the first instance for goodwill. At any rate, he urged that a scheme of compensation for a settled period of years was the only way of determining the question. The compensation should be provided by the trade, and he believed the bulk of the trade would be satisfied that it should be so. He thanked the Government for introducing the Bill, and especially for that part which dealt with clubs and the hawking of liquor in vans. That would be a good provision, especially in mining districts, and would do a great deal of good in the country.

MR. WALLACE (Perth) said his hon. friends who criticised the Bill had not the slightest intention of attempting to wreck it or hinder its passing. They wished, on the contrary, to give it their cordial support, but felt that it was not adequate to the necessities of the times, and that a great opportunity had been missed by the Government, seeing that Scottish opinion was ripe for a very much larger measure of reform than that now before them. They accepted with gratitude the Bill as an instalment, and they intended to show that gratitude by asking for more as soon as the Bill was passed. As for the Amendment of his hon. and learned friend, it was moved in order to give them an opportunity of saying—and they wanted to say it plainly—that whilst they supported the Bill and accepted it fully from the Government now, they did not in the slightest degree abandon the position which many of them had taken up in Scotland and in this House with regard to the question of local option. In accepting this Bill, it might be said it was an abandonment of that position. They recognised that the Bill went a certain way to meet their demands, and they took it as they would take anything that they believed was for the good of the people of Scotland; but in doing that, they still held to the view that it was for the people of Scotland to regulate this matter. He did not suppose that some of his hon. friends opposite, who in times past supported motions in favour of local option, were disposed to regard this Bill as an absolute settlement. They, therefore, were simply using this Amendment—and the right hon. Gentleman would thoroughly understand the position—as a method of expressing that view. He thought the Solicitor-General made one mistake. He said that the Motion of his hon. friend was a new Motion; that it was a proposal for local option in a new shape; and that his hon. and learned friend had become a convert to the principle of compensation. He did not know where the Solicitor-General got that view from. He was quite sure it was not the view of his hon. and learned friend. His hon. and learned friend assented to that. It had never been proposed by the temperance party in Scotland that by accepting local option they were going to couple with it compensation. His hon. and learned friend did refer to what had been so much discussed in Scotland, viz., the question of the time notice. His hon. friend the Member for East Renfrew, introduced the topic of compensation into the discussion of the Bill, although it was not, perhaps, strictly relevant, as there was no reference to compensation in the measure. He could quite easily understand why there was not. He had no doubt there were many who would wish to see such a provision in the Bill; but he believed the Lord Advocate would find that if he were to introduce a clause in the Bill giving compensation for licences taken away at the discretion of the magistrates he would arouse such hostility on both sides of the House as would absolutely wreck his Bill. We are not disposed to accept the principle of compensation. His hon. friend opposite said that they did recognise it, and that the law recognised it, because if a license holder died, his estate was valued, and on the value of the licence probate duty was paid. But the licence was simply valued on the chance of renewal, and that chance existed in the knowledge that it might be exercised the other way, and the licence taken away. He was quite sure they would never consent to any measure which, by introducing compensation, would completely fetter the discretion of the licensing authorities and prevent the taking away of many licences in Scotland.

He rejoiced in many of the provisions of the Bill, but there were one or two to which he strongly objected. He objected to the destruction of the licensing authority in the old and ancient Royal Burghs. That did not affect the burgh he represented; but he regretted that where they had forty or fifty little centres with a licensing authority in each, that that authority should be taken away He also objected to the large preponderance of the non-responsible justices' power, in connection with licensing courts, which was about to be established. It might be said that that was an advance on that which they had at present, and that in introducing the elective element at all the Government had gone forward. He recognised that fact, but he often found that to go forward a little way, for they did not go far enough, was often the most dangerous thing in the world, because it prevented them ever getting to the proper goal. The introduction of this representative element would be an excuse for years to come for doing nothing in connection with this matter. They had an opportunity now of dealing with these new licensing authorities; let them introduce a much larger infusion of the elective element, and recognise in that sense the demand for more popular control. With regard to the *bonâ-fide* traveller, his hon. and learned friend said that that person was the greatest humbug in the world. So he was. The *bonâ-fide* traveller, as they knew him in Scotland, was not a man who drank because he travelled, but who travelled that he might drink. The greatest curse in Scotland was the condition of many of the smaller towns on Sundays—where they had temperance and sobriety in the past. Ever since the introduction of the bicycle, which enabled the countryman to quickly cover his three miles, the streets in some of the country towns were a perfect disgrace to Scotland on Sundays owing to the *bonâ-fide* traveller. It was not as bad as that in Perth, where only one or two drunken persons were to be seen, and that not often; but in the towns surrounding it anyone must recognise what the *bonâ-fide* traveller was doing to demoralise the community among whom he came, and must feel that they must have a large extension of the distance which would qualify for drinking, and that the Bill must deal with this matter in some way. He cordially thanked the right hon. Gentleman for having introduced the Bill, and could assure him that, although they would do their best to amend it, they would take care not to destroy or retard it.

*SIR JOHN BATTY TUKE (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities) said he took that opportunity of expressing his regret that that important provision in the English Act, already alluded to by the hon. and learned Member for the Border

Burghs, was omitted from this Bill. It was a matter of great satisfaction to him that when the English Bill was passing through the House there was no opposition to it. England was ripe for such a measure, but Scotland was even more ripe and ready to accept a stronger measure. Knowing that fact, it surprised him extremely to find that there was no mention of the provision to which he referred. He wished he could say that there was no need for such a measure in Scotland. Alas! it was not so. Hon. Members, and especially members of the medical profession, knew of many miserable cases. He assured the House that never a week, certainly never a fortnight, passed without some unhappy man or woman coming to him and complaining of the wife or husband, and begging that he would give them some protection. He would take almost the last case that came before him. A man in a respectable position came to him and said—

> "My wife is an habitual drunkard, she gets liquor wherever she can, she goes out and gets it or sends the servants for it, and she is ruining our children physically and morally by her drinking and neglect. She is ruining my prospects, and soon I shall be a poor man Are there no Acts which will give me protection?"

His answer, of course, was that there were none; that the permissive Acts were absolutely futile; and that he must face his miserable position because the State gave him no relief. Much better would that man's position have been if he were able to tell him that there was a certain amount of protection for him; and that on proof before a court that his wife was an habitual drunkard, he could have a separation from her. At present there was no protection at all. These cases were inexpressibly sad, and were worse than cases of lunacy, for which there was a remedy provided by the State. A two or three line clause in the Bill on the same lines as that indicated by the hon. Member for Hawick Burghs would be beneficial, and sufficient for his purpose. He should certainly move a clause to that effect and make every effort to get the House to consent to it.

*MR. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire) said that while agreeing with the general purport of the eloquent and able speech of the hon. Member for Linlithgow, he would not be able to support the Amendment if taken to a division, on account of the words that no measure could be satisfactory which did not embody a particular proposal. The satisfactoriness of a Parliamentary measure was an exceedingly elastic quality, and when considering whether a measure was satisfactory, he should consider many things, as for example, the Government which was in power. Whenever he heard of the present Government introducing a measure of temperance reform he always relegated himself to the category of people who were blessed if they expected little. They had seen in the last few years that it was almost impossible to get the temperance camel through the eye of the Parliamentary needle. He, for his part, was always pleased if he could get a limb or two through. There were two tests which he always applied to such a Bill as this to see if he could support it. One was whether it went a step in the right direction, and the other was whether it drove any wedge between them and further temperance reform. This measure answered both tests. It was a good measure so far as it went, and it would not prevent them going further. While welcoming the measure, the main impression it left upon him was that of disappointment. He thought the Government missed a golden opportunity. The late Archbishop of Canterbury had said that this was not a brave Government, but it would be a brave Government that undertook to finally settle this question in Scotland. He rather sympathised with the Solicitor-General of Scotland, and the shock to his nerves in even contemplating such a possibility. No doubt, he saw a vision of himself in the midst of different classes of temperance reformers, each intoxicated with his own solution of the question. Under such circumstances naturally the Solicitor-General was not loath to soothe his nerves by appealing to the Minority Report of the Royal Commission. The right hon. and learned Gentleman had told them that the Minority Report had suggested that before this terrible Armageddon of temperance was to take place five years must elapse. Why must five years elapse? Because five years before this question could be settled they must make an arrangement for a time compensation for licences, and lay down a limit after which they were to be dealt with by the public. Why did not the right hon. Gentleman embody that in his Bill.

The right hon. Gentleman rather plumed himself on the fact, that while he had not given local control he had given a sort of local control, inasmuch as the licensing anthorities would now be more directly elected by the people than before. That was an excellent principle, and he welcomed it, but if that principle was right it must logically go a great deal further. Why should the right hon. Gentleman stop at one-third of the local representation? It would be argued by the Government that they were not anxious to introduce into the elections of County Councils too much of this temperance agitation, but if any fraction of the licensing authority was to be selected by the majority of the County Council, the element of agitation would enter all the same, whether the fraction was big or small. If they admitted that the licensing authority should be elected by the people, they at once cut out the whole foundations of the system of appeal, why should they have an appeal at all? Why in boroughs should they appeal from an authority that was entirely elected by the people to an authority very largely not so elected—an authority composed mainly of outsiders who had no connection with, and possibly no knowledge of, the place. Such an appeal was absolutely ludicrous. If they were going to have an appeal at all they must appeal more directly to the people. The only logical appeal against a licence would be to a referendum of the people. He frankly admitted that such a principle would be very difficult to adopt in practice, and he hoped that when this Bill came into Committee the Government would accept an Amendment to carry their convictions to their logical extent by abolishing the appeal entirely. He should like to have a declaration of what was the policy of the Government with regard to the question of licensed grocers. At present there was a clause which stipulated that licensed grocers should sell only in sealed vessels. That was very good, but the provision went further and said they should not keep drink on their premises except in sealed vessels. This provision seemed to let the hawk loose among the pigeons. The trade had taken it up most seriously, and they stated if they were not allowed to bottle whiskey or beer on the premises and to blend, there would be an end to their trade altogether. A deputation waited on Lord Balfour of Burleigh, and from the report of what he said he gathered that there was some idea of the Government accepting an Amendment which would allow the licensed grocer to continue this bottling and blending of drink. He was against having any connection between licensing and grocers, but he was willing to be reasonable. He did not want to administer to the grocers a slow poison, but he would rather deal with them in a straightforward and frank manner, and he would be willing to make a deal with the Government and say that the provision should be removed from the Bill providing they would add a clause which, while not at once doing away with all grocers' licences, would prevent the authorities from granting any new grocers' licences. So far as the Bill went it was a good measure, and he should support it and be thankful for small mercies.

SIR J. STIRLING-MAXWELL (Glasgow College) said there had been a very pleasing harmony about this debate, but the attitude of mingled disappointment and gratitude with which the House had received the measure was not very inspiriting. He had been very much struck with what was said by the hon. Member for Linlithgow about the reconstruction of the licensing authorities, and the hon. Member spoke in this connection of a rabble. He was, however, very much surprised to find that the remedy the hon. Member proposed was to go to a rabble indeed, for he said these matters ought to be decided by a popular vote on the widest possible suffrage. He agreed with what the hon. Member said in condemnation of the justices, and he liked the provision dealing with the subject in the Bill because it remedied the defects which he thought the justices had shown up to now. He wished to draw the attention of the House to the astonishing omission from the Bill of any attempt to deal with earlier closing in the large cities. He did not think it was necessary for the Government to hold an opinion in favour of that extension of powers; but he should say there was an almost unanimous wish in Scotland that those powers should be extended. He contended that the Government were quite wrong in leaving this question undecided. One aspect of the case which was not without importance was a question at this moment undecided—that was to say, it was doubtful whether, under the Act of 1862, large cities had not already the power of earlier closing. It seemed to him that any Government in seriously tackling the licensing problem acted quite wrongly to shirk this question. Another matter he would liked to have seen dealt with was the difficulty of reducing the number of licences. He did not say that even a large reduction would produce the benefit which some people expected from it, but no strong licensing body could be created without the question of the proper number of public-houses in their district coming before them in an urgent form, and in some cases it would be decided that the number ought to be reduced. In view of what had happened in England, it was evident that in the absence of any system under which compensation could be awarded, the licensing authority had not really a free hand in the matter, and that, whatever their powers under the law might be, they would never make full use of them. In avoiding this matter the Government had been peculiarly timid, inasmuch as the principle had already been decided by the Prime Minister, and though he did not agree with all his right hon. friend had said on the matter, some of his statements going dangerously far, he thoroughly agreed that the present position of affairs was intolerable, and that something ought to be done to remedy it. The compensation scheme suggested by the hon. and learned Member for Linlithgow seemed to be one which might wisely be adopted, and one which he believed could easily be carried through the House. While he welcomed the Bill as being drawn on right lines where it touched the matter at all, it was a real disappointment that a Bill, produced under better auspices than any previous licensing measure had ever been, should have been marred by such grave omissions. He earnestly hoped the Government would make up their minds in Committee, not only to consider, but to accept, Amendments largely increasing the scope of the Bill, and carrying out the reforms to which he had referred.

Mr. CHARLES DOUGLAS (Lanarkshire, N. W.) said the scheme propounded by the mover of the Amendment suffered under the disadvantage that while it existed partly in the memory and partly in the hope of the hon. Member it had no existence in print, and consequently the House were at a loss in considering it. He agreed that there was a strict limit to the utility of the purely police regulations, of which the Bill was largely composed, because, excellent as they were, they easily and rapidly fell into disuse. In a few years the black list would be of little importance, and the grocers' licence pass-book of small value. The cause of this was the fact that the licensing authority had behind it so little serious motive power, so little sense of responsibility. On that ground he welcomed the introduction of the new principle of placing a popular element on all licensing authorities. There would then be on all what now did not exist on any—a body of opinion selected by popular representatives for the sole purpose of dealing with the function of licensing. It was true the magistrates represented popularly elected bodies, but they were appointed for a number of purposes other than that of licensing. But once that principle was introduced it would be difficult to resist the argument for widely extending it. If the County Councils were allowed to select representatives specially for licensing purposes, might it not be equally reasonable to allow town councils not to depend simply on the magistrates but to select a licensing committee solely for licensing purposes. In the same way, if the popular element was admitted at all, was it not reasonable to suggest that it should be admitted to a much larger extent. It was true that this "hybrid committee" had high authority, and the proposal of it was of great importance, but would it not be simpler and more reasonable to leave the matter altogether to representatives appointed by the County Council, and eliminate the justice of the peace element entirely. The reason the change was being made was that the justices of the peace had done badly, and it was hoped to improve the action of the licensing authority by displacing them in part.

Were the Government not much more likely to effect their purpose by displacing them altogether on the ground of their failure properly to discharge their functions? This composite body was essentially a compromise, but it was difficult to see the ground on which the compromise was made. It could not be that the County Councils were considered less likely than the justices to provide suitable men, because they were to be allowed to select members of the authority, while if the view was that there might be a difference of opinion or policy between the justices and the representatives of the County Councils that was the strongest possible reason for leaving the justices off entirely.

In the Appeal Court there obtained the same vicious principle of allowing the non-elective element to dominate the popular representatives. The retention of this proportion of magistrates might avoid some of the distractions at County Council elections, but it would not prevent the discussion of these matters. Instead of having only one theatre of agitation, viz., amongst the justices, the Government were creating two, because, in addition to the canvassing and political activity at the County Council elections there would still be the canvassing which prevailed at present, but instead of taking place at the election of justices it would occur at the election of the licensing Courts. Instead of concentrating, the Government were actually widening the area in which the conflict between public opinion and the trade could arise. He did not shrink from that contest, but it was desirable that it should be narrowed as much as possible, so that there should be the smallest opportunity for the licensed trade to influence the administration of public affairs. As to the proposal with regard to the Appeal Courts, he did not think the small burghs, whether Royal or others, had furnished the most happy cases of licensing administration. It would be much better to raise the limit than to lower it, and to create only such licensing committees as would be sufficient in themselves, and would not need the complicated supervision of the Appeal Court. In fact, he would suggest that the right hon. Gentleman should make the licensing area coincide with the police area, with a population of 20,000 as the minimum.

He agreed with those who had expressed their regret at the omission from the Bill of any provisions dealing with the question of the reduction of licences. The reduction of the number of licences, though it might be less necessary in Scotland than in some parts of England, was an essential element in any real measure of reform. It had become more than ever necessary that Parliament should take some action in this matter on account of the recent speech of the Prime Minister. He could not help thinking that a very grave and difficult situation was created by the language which had been used by the Prime Minister upon this subject, the only effect of which would be to harass the magistrates in the discharge of their duty. In the present state of the law a hardship might easily be imposed, but the effect of the language of the Prime Minister would be to deter magistrates from reducing licences without compensation. He thought the Government might have left the magistrates free to exercise their own discretion in the matter. There was one other matter. He thought there was considerable reason to suppose that in the future, and indeed in the near future, a good deal of drinking in the country was likely to be done outside the licensed houses. It had been recognised that a difficulty had been created by the extraordinary abuse of the club system, which he was glad had been dealt with in the present Bill. He hoped the provisions in regard to clubs would be made more effective. There was another theatre of action besides the licensed houses and the clubs—he alluded to the trust public houses which were springing up all over Scotland. By this system they might easily have a most serious danger created. They had not only to consider the large trusts, but there were springing up small trusts, confined to a single village, managed as a village company not under the control of their neighbours, but managing public houses which were returning fixed interest on capital and which devoted the rest of their profits to public purposes. That was all very well, but they had very little security against breaches of the Licensing Laws and had management, and there was little security against public scandal in the small public houses. He thought this case presented a state of matters different to that of the ordinary licence holder. They had a licence held in the name of those who either did not own or did not manage the licence itself, and he ventured to suggest that it might be possible to include in the Bill at the Committee Stage some clause by which companies such as those he had described should be allowed to hold licences only which had been approved by the Secretary for Scotland or some other responsible authority. They might in a few years time develop into houses with a hold on the popular sympathy which would be so great that it would be difficult for any licensing authority to displace them. The matter could be easily dealt with, because these houses were few, but if they became numerous, a few years hence Parliament might find it difficult to deal with them. He hoped the Lord Advocate would not think they were dissembling too much their appreciation of this Bill. He joined with his hon. friends in saying that he had no wish to obstruct the Bill, he rather wished to strengthen the hands of the Government in dealing with the question.

*MR. CORBETT (Glasgow, Tradeston) said that any great recognition of public control would raise in an acute form the question of compensation. When he spoke of compensation he did not refer to differences of opinion as to issues involving merely questions of time limit. The speech of the hon. Member for Perth was an indication as to how there was a confusion of opinion upon this point because he alluded to the hon. Member who moved the Amendment as not being in favour of compensation because he only advocated the time limit, while he alluded to the hon. Member for East Renfrewshire as an advocate of compensation, although the hon. Member who introduced the Amendment described himself as being in favour of a time limit of exactly the same number of years as advocated by the hon. Member for East Renfrewshire. Some hon. Members had spoken as if this were a great opportunity of passing a far-reaching measure of temperance reform. His opinion was that this was a time when they should be very careful and watch what they were doing. They knew that a very influential body of the supporters of the Government had told them that they had made the Government and they could unmake it. They had demanded that the licences, which had hitherto been recognised as merely constituting rights from year to year, should be recognised in the future as freehold, and that a vested interest would be set up amounting to probably hundreds of millions which would interfere with all temperance prospects for the future. There might be many opinions as to the facilities for the supply of drink, but there would be no differences of opinion in Scotland as to the compensation he had alluded to. Therefore, in the suggestions he had to offer he would avoid doing anything which might raise the larger issues.

He agreed with his hon. friend who had addressed the House as to the importance of large towns no longer being exposed to the disability of being excluded from the advantages of ten o'clock closing. He believed that exclusion was never wanted by public opinion in those large towns. When addressing a large meeting of Unionists in his own constituency he asked for a show of hands on this question, and practically all present held up their hands in favour of including all large towns within the scope of that measure, and not a single hand was held up in favour of the continued exclusion of large towns from the operation of ten o'clock closing. There was practically unanimity of opinion on that subject among the whole population of Glasgow, with hardly any opposition except a partial opposition from the trade, and the Government would greatly disappoint the people of the large towns in Scotland if they prevented them enjoying advantages which had done so much good throughout the smaller communities. He was glad that this Bill dealt with clubs. The municipalities of Scotland introduced a measure which would have dealt even more effectively with this question. He believed the Government proposals were the very best that could be found if they were to stop short of giving full discretionary power. This matter would never be effectively dealt with until they gave the licensing authority the same discretion with regard to clubs as they gave them with regard to licensed victuallers, premises. They would always be liable to evasion until they entrusted to some body the question whether a club was a nuisance to the neighbourhood or not.

He was glad that this Bill contained provisions to deal with grocers' vans, which had been described as travelling public-houses. He believed those provisions required to be strengthened, and every one of those vans should be able to produce a written signed order from the customer. If that were done a great amount of security would be gained. There was another point upon which he felt very strongly indeed. There was unquestionably a considerable number of people who felt the temptation to strong drink to such an extent that it made life to them a burden. During the fair holidays in Glasgow it was possible to visit homes where the men, days after their holidays, did not venture to cross their threshold for fear of the temptation that awaited them outside. If they could say to all such individuals "We will give you the power of signing a declaration before the justices of the peace that you desire your name to be added to the list of those to whom liquor should not be supplied," it would be a good thing. He believed that would free those individuals from a terrible burden and bondage, and great good would be done to all those depending upon such men. Although he offered those suggestions he could not agree with those who said that the advantages offered by this Bill were of a trivial character. He had had conferences upon this subject with the representatives of all the temperance organisations in Scotland, and they all agreed with him in thinking that this was a Bill which must not be lost. They saw in it very valuable provisions which would advance materially the interests of temperance, and with those interests were bound up the interests and the prosperity of the people.

MR. ASHER (Elgin Burghs) said he was one of those who thought that nothing should be done at the present stage of this Bill to prevent the measure going to the Committee. He was supported in that view by the statement of the Solicitor-General for Scotland, who had distinctly indicated that in Committee the Government would keep an open mind with regard to these questions which were being discussed, and with regard to which it was quite evident there was a feeling, particularly on this side of the House, in favour of the Blli being materially strengthened.

Some differences of opinion had been expressed as to how far the present opportunity should be taken advantage of to extend local control of the liquor traffic. He should think that both sides of the House would be agreed that, at any rate in the present case, nothing should be done to take away any measure of local control which was now existing. He rose chiefly for the purpose of voicing the views of those who, he thought, had been very unfairly treated by this Bill. He meant the smaller burghs. The smaller burghs were those that comprised a population of under 7,000, and they were to be deprived by this Bill of the jurisdiction which they had exercised for a very long period of time. He protested against the view that in discharging their duty as licensing authority they had in any way fallen short of the standard which had been maintained by the magistrates in the larger burghs. It was quite true that the Licensing Court, consisting of the magistrates of a burgh, might not be an ideal licensing authority, but at least it had this merit: that the Licensing Court consisted of persons who were the representatives of the people, whose tenure of office was for a limited period, and who had periodically to answer to their constituents for the manner in which they had performed their duty as Licensing Court, as well as in regard to their other function as burgh magistrates. What did this Bill propose to do with regard to that? Every burgh of under 7,000 of a population was to be deprived altogether of their licensing bodies, and what was to be substituted for it? There was to be a court consisting to the extent of one-third of magistrates of the burgh, and to the extent of two-thirds of justices of the peace. He thought he was entitled to say that though they had heard a great deal about steps in the right direction, this proposal could only be characterised as a retrograde step—a step in the opposite direction to that which they all desired. It was displacing a body representative in the sense he had described, and substituting for it a body which to the extent of two-thirds consisted of gentlemen who were representative of nobody but themselves, whose tenure of office was perpetual, and who were the nominees of the Lord-Lieutenant of the county. He confessed, speaking with all respect for the justices of the peace, that he thought it would puzzle the wit of man to devise a worse licensing authority than the justices of the peace. He had no doubt they discharged their duty conscientiously, but he believed the general impression throughout Scotland was that they were the worst licensing authority that could possibly be created. Were the small burghs not entitled to complain of a proposal which took licensing within the burghs, out of the hands of the elected magistrates of the burgh, and placed it in the hands of a body which to the extent of two-thirds was not elected and non-representative—a body in which, with all respect to the justices of the peace, the public had no confidence as a licensing authority. He hoped that among those questions which the right hon. and learned Gentleman in charge of the Bill intended to keep his mind open upon, this would be one. He thought in dealing with those small towns the right hon. Gentleman had gone altogether in the wrong direction. Burghs were communities for local administration. They had a distinct civic life, apart altogether from that of the adjacent county, and he could not imagine any matter in regard to which they were more fully and freely able to regulate themselves than in the matter of licensing. He said he thought it would have been a proposition far more likely to commend itself to the people of Scotland if his right hon. and learned friend, instead of withdrawing this jurisdiction of the magistrates and conferring it upon a body such as he had described, had set to work to reform the Licensing Courts in those burghs. If, instead of leaving authority in the hands of magistrates, who, it was quite true, were not elected direct for licensing purposes, but were elected by the Council, he had conferred on the Council the power of electing a special Committee of their own number to deal specifically with the matter of licensing, and if he had, when he came to deal with the small burghs, adopted a course like that, he himself felt that it would have commended itself to the people of Scotland generally, and also to the inhabitants of those burghs. It was not unnatural that in dealing with a question like this there should be a feeling of hostility with regard to the Bill. There were between forty and fifty burghs in Scotland, many of them county towns of importance, with 5,000 or 6,000 inhabitants, which were to be so treated. He was in a position to say that there was a unanimous feeling throughout the whole of that section of the community that the proposal in this Bill was a grave injustice, and that if the Bill were to pass without this being rectified it would be received with feelings of hostility on the part of that section of the Scotch community.

He thought that it was most desirable that this Bill should be put into a shape which would make it an effective and useful measure of licensing reform, and he felt perfectly sure that if the Scotch Members were allowed to express their opinions freely and if the right hon. Gentleman would give effect to the feelings of hon. Members on this matter, the Bill might be made a most useful licensing reform with regard to Scotland. He thought the Scotch Members were in a position to assist the Government to make this a useful measure. Many of them were making considerable sacrifices of their opinions on this matter. He had no hesitation in saying for himself that his own opinion went a long way in advance of anything in the Bill in the way of popular control of the liquor traffic, but as practical men they were aware that it was impossible to pass a Bill up to the standard many of them desired. In dealing with the Bill they would give every assistance in their power to make it a useful measure, and they hoped that in return the Government would keep an open mind in regard to the matters to be brought forward in Committee.

MR. PARKER SMITH (Lanarkshire, Partick) said he was glad to hear from the opposite side that the Amendment proposed by his hon. friend would not be pressed to a division. It seemed to him that it would put hon. Members in a false position if they had to vote upon it. He would regard whole and direct popular control as absolutely necessary for any deep solution of this great question, but at the same time he was not in the least surprised that it had not been undertaken at the present moment; in fact he thought with his hon. friend behind him that it would be an inauspicious moment to attempt that. They were all aware of the great tempest that had recently been raised in England on this question. The whole question of popular control, compensation, and interference with licences, had been brought forward in England with an acuteness which had never before been witnessed, and he thought therefore that this would be a very inappropriate moment for the modest and comparatively simple and easy Scotch question to come under consideration, while they did not know what was being done in regard to the greater English question which surrounded them.

Everyone who had spoken in the present debate had been to a very great extent agreed upon the fearful evil drunkenness caused in the country, and they were agreed also on the necessity of legislation to meet it. It was no use to go over the statements made by every responsible person as to the serious increase of drunkenness in the country. Drunkenness increased along with prosperity. It was not misfortune or want that drove people to drink. It was a fact that when prosperity came and wages went up drunkenness and its consequent crime increased in proportion, or in more than proportion. He thought it ought to be acknowledged that the necessity for legislation was recognised by the Members of the Trade, and that they were prepared, to a much greater extent than some of the allusions in the debate might lead people to suppose, in a reasonable and liberal way to deal with the proposals which were now being made—proposals which were to a great extent equally as valuable to the Trade as they were to the people. These proposals would make their position more clear and certain, and would give remedies against the action of those black sheep who did the reputation of the whole Trade very much harm. They could not expect to have agreement from the Trade in all the restrictions they wished to put on them, but he thought it should be acknowledged that the Trade were perfectly willing to accept legislation which would greatly improve the position with regard to their affairs. He thought that everyone who accepted this Bill, and at the same time thought it should go much further, ought to make it clear that they in no way gave up those claims to press the matter further which they had maintained in the past. For his part he had at repeated elections always taken the same line, namely, that he approved to the full of direct popular control, provided there was sufficient consideration given for the individuals whose interests were concerned. He had again and again on the hustings supported that view. He believed that popular control was needed over the traffic, whether it came to the actual veto, which in some localities would be most suitable—or whether it meant the limitation of licences or a system of management either by the local authority or a company to whom it delegated its powers. They would not make general social changes at the expense of individuals, and if they were displacing certain individuals for the sake of a change, however important it might be regarded in the general interest, they must consider the interests of those people and compensate them either by time or money provided by the Trade. That was a very general opinion of Members on that side of the House, who would view with consternation any attempted compensation out of rates and taxes. He would not conceive that any man in his senses would propose such a thing in view of the past, which should be a treason to the Government.

If in England a new Act of Parliament had stimulated old bodies into activity, he believed that in many cases a newly constituted body would show greater vigour in dealing with licences than those which had existed hitherto. The general principle of local option should make one anxious that small authorities should have a voice in dealing with licences in their own districts. In regard to the licensing authorities he thought they had too much of the justice of the peace in their composition. This was not of so much importance in practice as in theory, for when they came to select half-a-dozen justices of the peace they would probably get the same class of individuals as half-a-dozen members of the County Council. But some acknowledgment of the rights of popular control should be made, and it would be most unfortunate and would produce a bad impression in Scotland if they did not give the elective body—the County Council—at least as many voices on the licensing authorities as they did to the nominated body of justices of the peace. He regretted that the Government had not inserted in the Bill a fuller option for great cities with regard to the hours of opening at morning and closing at night. He hoped they would accept Amendments in Committee on this point. The Government had drawn a very safe Bill, and had taken up almost entirely non-controversial points. He thought, considering the state of opinion in Scotland and the gravity with which the mass of the people regarded this question, the Government might with safety have gone a great deal farther. He hoped that when they got into Committee they would find as large a representation of Scotch Members as possible, and that the Government would show themselves willing to accept the opinion of Scotland through those Members.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): considered that time would have been saved if the discussion had not been directed to matters upon which the Government had already put down their foot. It was difficult to say where the objections to the Bill began and where they ended. The right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill said he was willing to give favourable consideration to any Amendments urged upon him with the object of improving it. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would consider the question of doing away with the rights and privileges of the small burghs of Scotland. No reason had been alleged why those small local authorities should be swept out of existence, and be swallowed up by inclusion in a large number of elected magistrates and County Council representatives. Those burghs had a civic life within themselves, and bitterly resented what they considered to be a grave injustice. Numbers did not make intelligence, nor did size make strength, and it would be found that the small burghs in the North, comprising only a few thousand inhabitants, were as full of civic life and virtue as the more populous counties. He regarded the subject of grocers' licences as a thorny one, but the Government were not to be altogether commended for the way in which they had dealt with it. Would the right. hon. Gentleman look carefully through Clause 9 and see if it were workable, and whether it could not be amended in important details without injuring any principle in the Bill. What was objected to more than anything else in Clause 9 was that the whole of the law on this subject would be left entirely in the hands of the local authorities. What he thought should be done would be to prevent varying regulations to be made in different parts of the country, and that the operations of the clause should be scheduled and put down on hard and fast lines. It would be intolerable that in one burgh premises should be closed on New Year's Day and not in all the others. He respectfully submitted to the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill that that day should be scheduled, and that on a variety of other days—more especially election days, such as was the universal rule in the Colonial Empire—public-houses should be closed.

They had been told that things should be allowed to go on exactly as at present with regard to the grocers' clubs. He hoped that would not be so. In many cases throughout Scotland, the grocers were the greatest offenders. There were no doubt many who conducted their business honestly and honourably, but, on the other hand, there were many grocers' shops which were nothing short of drinking dens. He did not wish to attack the honest grocer who was acting according to law and did not encourage drunkenness. Under this section, a grocer would have to keep all his liquors in sealed bottles, vessels, or jars. How inconvenient it would be for any man to sell six pennyworth of rum or whisky from a sealed vessel every five minutes. The vessel would have to be unsealed and sealed again. That provision had caused a great deal of irritation in the Trade. He did not think that the Government meant that it should work in that way. As the clause stood, however, it meant that the grocer had to keep the liquor in sealed vessels, and be put to the inconvenience of unsealing and sealing them every few minutes. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not regard that as any frivolous objection; and the right hon. Gentleman would find that many of the criticisms of the Bill would disappear if he consented to some modification of the clause.

With reference to Clause 17, they knew perfectly well that a great deal of drunkenness was caused in Scotland by the selling of liquor from vans. In his opinion, not only should the suggestion of the hon. Member who had just spoken, that no liquor should be sold from a van except on a signed order be adopted, but he would propose that no liquor should be sold from a van except in a sealed vessel. At present vans went about the country, especially in the summer, selling beer and other strong drinks in open measures, without any possible control whatever.

Then as to drunkenness, and the increase of the penalties for drunkenness, it was an unfortunate thing for a man to get drunk; but he did not think that they were improving the position by increasing the fines and penalties. The man who got drunk was probably punished severely enough as it was; and the burden of the fine would fall on his family. It would be different if they could get at the man who made another drunk; but he did not think it was any good simply increasing the penalties for drunkenness.

There was another great blot in the Bill. Take the case of a man coming into a town and requiring a little refreshment. He was not able to obtain in a public house the refreshment he was entitled to get; and there was no provision in the Bill to compel a public house to supply a cup of tea, coffee, cocoa, or Bovril, or other reasonable refreshment. If there were such a provision, it would remove many of the evils of drunkenness. Most people did not want to get drunk, but because they were not able to get the particular kind of refreshment they required they took strong drink. With reference to the prohibition as to selling drink to people on the black list, he did not think that provision went quite far enough. It should be provided that a man might apply himself, or that his wife or other relative might apply, for an order prohibiting him from being supplied with drink. He knew in his own experience of a man applying to a magistrate for an order to prevent him being served with drink. Many people were unable to fight against the temptation. He knew a case where a respectable man got into a railway carriage and refused to pay his fare. He was promptly locked up; and being asked afterwards why he did not pay, he said that he had not tasted drink for six months, and as he was in town with money in his pocket he required the wholesome restraint of a gaol before he could trust himself. That showed what a poor man struggling with the demon of drink would do to prevent himself becoming a slave to drink. If the Government would consider the Amendments he had suggested, he had no doubt that the measure would achieve great and lasting good in Scotland, which he was sure was the wish of every Member of the House.

SIR CHARLES RENSHAW (Renfrew, W.) said the discussion on the Bill was exceedingly interesting, especially to hon. Members who, like himself, had taken an active part in local administration in Scotland. For his part he desired to thank the Government for what he believed was an honest effort to settle, in a simple and effective way, some of the difficult problems connected with the question of licensing reform. He was glad that the Government had not introduced into the measure some of the provisions which they might have introduced, but which would greatly imperil the prospects of the measure becoming law during the present session. He wished especially to refer to the proposal in the Bill to constitute a new licensing authority in Scotland. With reference to the proposal to take away from the smaller burghs in Scotland power to deal with licensing questions in their own area he would point out that there were two sides to the question. Even the Minority Report of the Royal Commission was in favour of taking away from these extremely small burghs the power to deal with licensing questions. What was proposed by the Bill was to merge these small burghs into the counties; and he should like to remind the House that what the smaller burghs would lose in regard to powers within their own area they would gain by having a voice in determining the number of licences to be granted in the districts surrounding their own boundaries. Therefore, if licences were improperly accumulating on their borders, they would have a voice in limiting them. There was a great deal to be said in favour of what was, he believed, the unanimous Report of the Royal Commission, certainly the Minority Report, viz., doing away with the powers of the licensing authorities in these small burghs. Several hon. Members argued very strongly against the constitution of the new licensing authorities, and said that the proportion of one-third from the County Council and two-thirds from justices of the peace, was improper and undesirable, and ought to be reversed. He hoped, however, that the Government would adhere to that proposal. He believed it was a wise proposal, and that if the proportion of members from the County Council were increased, it would probably have the effect of injuring local administration in Scotland. They wanted as representatives of the County Councils of Scotland good, sound business men, who were elected because they were intelligent and willing to give their time to serve the best interests of the localities, viz., the administration of questions connected with roads and public health. At present an admirable class was elected to discharge those duties, but if they threw upon the County Councils the entire charge of administrating the licensing laws the effect would undoubtedly be that at every election there would be a fight as between the temperance party and the party which supported the publicans, and in place of having their local county representative appointed because he was a good administrator and likely to look well after questions of local economy, they would have him elected because he was either in favour with the local teetotalers or the local publicans. That would be a most unfortunate introduction into the public life of the counties of Scotland. It would be said that something of the kind existed in the burghs, but he would ask any person who compared local administration in burghs and in counties whether they would not find far greater economy in the county than in the burgh. He believed they would, and therefore it was a pity to make an alteration.

He was not particularly called upon to defend any branch of the Trade in Scotland, but speaking from his own personal experience he believed that in the main those who carried on the grocery trade in Scotland did not deserve the words which the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland applied to them. He believed they were carrying on a difficult trade in a very useful way, and that the sub-section of the Bill which would compel grocers not only to carry on their trade by selling only in sealed vessels but also would not allow them to bottle on the premises, would inflict upon them an unnecessary and undeserved hardship. He thought they might perfectly well carry on their trade with such a restriction.

The question of the desirability of dealing with compensation in the Bill had been brought forward. It was a very difficult subject. He was in favour undoubtedly of a time limit, or of compensation to come from some Trade source being ultimately applied to a solution of this question. But what would be the position of this Bill if this proposal were to be dealt with in it? It would not only be fought as a Scottish question, but as an English question as well. It would be impossible to avoid that. No question had more excited public interest in the last few months than the action which had been taken at the Brewster Sessions by English magistrates. The decisions come to, in no way the consequence of the legislation of last year, had arisen, he believed, from the fact that the discussion of that legislation had impressed people with the knowledge that public opinion in regard to the question of licensing had undergone a great change, and that public feeling was much more in favour of general restriction than it ever was before. That would inevitably lead in its effects throughout England, whatever proposals were brought forward in connection with the Scotch Bill, to the whole principle being fought out on lines applicable to the whole of the United Kingdom, and not on Scottish lines. Therefore, whilst he was glad that the question had been brought forward, he hoped it would not be pressed in Committee, but that they would be allowed to deal with the Bill on the limited lines on which it had been brought in. He was quite sure if that were done there would be no substantial difficulty in passing the Bill this session and thus adding a valuable measure to the Statute Book.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): We have had a characteristic debate upon this Scotch Bill, a debate which I think is creditable to the Scotch Members of the House of Commons. It has been discussed without any shadow of party spirit, without any excitement, with nothing to arrest the attention of the gallery, and in a way that is not likely to contribute anything for the gentlemen of the Press—I mean for their observations and their news of the morning. It has been from beginning to end a business-like, practical, and common-sense discussion, with only one object on the part of those who have taken a share in it—viz., to make it the best Bill we can for the country which we represent. I think the hon. Member for Linlithgow did well to put down this Amendment—not with a view to opposing the Bill, but as a necessary protest, as it were, on the part of those—they are not confined to one side of the House—who wish to see temperance legislation carried much further, a protest in favour of a more advanced measure, and a warning of what the hon. and learned Gentlemen opposite might call a *caveat*, that we did not accept this as in any way bringing Scotch legislation on this subject up to the level to which we should like to see it brought. On that ground I am a little suspicious of the pretext put forward that this Bill is intended to embody the main provisions of the English Bill of last session. For Heaven's sake, do not let us get in the way of thinking that England is to have the good things, and that in due time, when opportunity offers, Scotland is to receive anything that is left. Scotland has always been ahead on this subject, as it has been on most subjects, and I hope she will long continue to occupy that position.

The Solicitor-General spoke of the Bill being received with a large measure of favour, but that must not be misunderstood. If you met a hungry man in the street and offered him a crust of bread he would receive it with a large measure of favour, but he would much rather a substantial and ample dinner; and it is that substantial and ample dinner that we wish to receive, and we are sorry it is only this crust of bread that we get. I have only one main criticism to offer upon this Bill, and only one, which I consider of the first rank in importance, and that is that it is an infringement—or at any rate it fails to carry out completely the principle of popular government. I am in favour, as are many other Members, of direct popular control in this matter, but there is another condition quite as essential as directness and popularity, and that is that the control should be local control. You may have popular control in one sense by men who are imported from a distance. For instance, if there was a question of the number of licences in Great George Street, Westminster, and the people of the locality were a good deal exercised about having too many public houses among them, it would be very small consolation to know that it had been referred to a County Councillor who happened to be elected by the voters in Islington or Brixton, or some other part of the Metropolis. What you want in this case as in all others is personal knowledge of the facts, the wants, the nuisances, and the desires of the locality, and you cannot get that by the importation of any number either of justices of the peace, or of County Councillors from other parts of the county. It is in that respect that I think this Bill fails. There is, in fact, in the Government somehow—and it extends to the two learned Gentlemen opposite—an ingrained, and ineradicable tendency and desire to take this most circuitous and roundabout way to secure what they call popular control when there is a direct, straight and easy avenue to the same result ready to their hands.

Very much has been said, and more will be said when we get into Committee, of the proposal to take away the licensing power of the smaller burghs. My objection to the Bill is that it takes that power away from men who know all the circumstances, and who, though they may use their powers badly, do it with full knowledge of the circumstances, and who are directly answerable to their electors for the action they take. The Solicitor-General implied that the magistrates in a Scotch burgh are not directly elected. But they are members of the Town Council, who are elected by their colleagues to fill the place of magistrates. I do not know that you could have anything bringing more plainly into a position of direct responsibility to the community whose interests they serve. But the proposal is that these smaller burghs should lose their powers, and then there is the further proposal of placing on the Appeal Court a preponderance of nominated members of justices of the peace. I agree with what has been said about the absurdity of that Appeal Court, especially in the larger counties. But why should we have an Appeal Court at all? It is almost incumbent upon us, when dealing with this matter, to settle the elementary proposition — Is an Appeal Court necessary? In what other department of civic authority do you have an over-riding authority above those who are directly charged with the business? The magistrates and Town Council in a great city have to deal with questions of all kinds, and of enormous importance, but they are not subject to appeal to any other authority in respect of their dealings in those great matters. Why should this one question of licensing be selected for appeal? Then, assuming we are to have this Appeal Court, the Court is to consist of representatives of the burghs and districts, and of certain other justices of the peace in a proportion which will outnumber the direct representatives of the locality. My objection is not only to the fact of the justices of the peace being nominated, and not elected persons, but to the fact of their being distant persons, and the vice of distant residence and distant knowledge may just as well apply to County Councillors as to justices of the peace or any other persons.

Take the proposal of the Government, as I understand it, with regard to a county of which I have some acquaintance —the county of Stirling. In that county there are three burghs: Stirling, which comes just under the 20,000 line, and is to have two of its magistrates on the Court of Appeal; Grangemouth, which is to have one representative; and Kilsyth, which also is to have one representative. The county will thus have four representatives on the Appeal Court, and accordingly there will be eight justices of the peace added to neutralise the four. But it much more than neutralises them on the test of locality, because the men who represent Kilsyth and Grangemouth know nothing whatever of the desires of the people of Stirling, so that in that case it will not be four against eight but two against ten. The element of locality is the dominating element of the whole thing, because the question of whether licences are to be granted or withheld is one of the convenience, wishes, and interests of the people of the locality, and it is only men who have a close knowledge of the locality that are fit judges in the matter.

These are the principal objections I take to the provisions of the Bill. I have said that I hardly see what sufficient reason there is for the maintenance of the Court of Appeal at all. But I admit that we cannot expect much assistance from the Government in that matter, because the Prime Minister pins his faith to the Court of Appeal, and has already, in cases which are actually pending, invoked and invited the Court of Appeal to upset what he is pleased to consider the erroneous decisions of the court of first instance, a remarkable performance, which I think is almost unequalled in a public functionary of his importance and standing. But while I have now great hope that they will do away with the Court of Appeal altogether, I hope they will keep an open mind and give the fullest consideration to suggestions for altering its constitution. I was glad to hear he Solicitor-General use an expression tending in that direction—that he had no strong opinion on the subject himself, and that when we got into Committee he knew the Government would listen to representations on the matter. I trust that we shall find that to be so, and that the Government will leave it an open question in the sense of not exerting their authority for the purpose of thwarting what may appear to be the opinion and desire of Scottish Members.

I do not wish to touch on the great and thorny question of compensation. I think it would have been better not to have introduced it at all, because there are peculiar reasons at present, as we all know, for avoiding that Sirbonian bog. If we once plunged into it I do not know how much it would add to the duration of our debates, or to what extent it would endanger the passage of the Bill. I hope the measure will pass, and that the two learned

Gentlemen opposite will not too rigidly adhere to their own proposals, but give their assistance to those Members who wish to amend the Bill. Proceeding in that spirit, I hope the Bill will be made one, which, to a greater degree than now, will be for the good of, and advantage to, the Scottish people.

*The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): I do not think that at any time when I have been in charge of a measure before this House I have found myself with so little to do in the Second Reading debate as on this occasion. Everything that I ought to do has been done for me by speakers on either side of the House. I do not mean that there has been a chorus of approval of all that is in the Bill, but that when anybody has made a specific proposal as shown in the varied Amendments on the Paper somebody has immediately got up on the same side of the House and condemned the proposal. As long as Members dealt in generalities they were safe, but the moment they put down definite Amendments the difficulty appeared. The Amendment we are technically discussing invites us to go into, I will not say the Sirbonian bog but the quagmire of local option. Local option by itself is bad enough, but the hon. and learned Member explained that he was not content with local option as ordinarily understood; he wanted a sort of hydra-headed local option, including such other topics as the municipal management of public houses. I need scarcely say that if I had responded to that appeal there would have to be introduced into the Bill a set of the most complicated clauses that have ever faced a draftsman. I am quite content to rest on the solemn declaration of one of the speakers on the learned Member's own side of the House, that to accede to the Amendment would undoubtedly wreck the Bill. In the same way with the Amendment dealing with the subject of compensation, we have just had a warning from the right hon. Gentleman opposite, who agrees that we were well advised to leave that subject alone. I am not going to discuss the subject of compensation further than to say that I must not be held necessarily to agree with any of the views which have been promulgated in the course of this debate, but I entirely associate myself with the remark of my hon. friend the Member for Renfrewshire that compensation can never be dealt with as a purely Scottish question. Whatever may be our views as to compensation, there is no place for them in this Bill. Having said that, I think we may congratulate ourselves that all are agreed that at any rate we are doing something for the cause of temperance and good government by the provisions of this Bill. No doubt, as the hon. Member for Kincardineshire said, in considering what is satisfactory you must always consider those to whom you are giving anything, and he added that in looking at this Bill he was constrained to exclaim, "Blessed are those who expect little." The right. hon. Gentleman opposite also said that a hungry man would be glad of a crust, but he would like a full meal better. I hope that both those Gentlemen have sufficiently good memories to go back to the time of the Government of which the right hon. Gentleman was a distinguished member, and to remember their temperance proposals. I think the hon. Gentleman will then add to his proverbs, "How unblest are those who expect too much," and the right hon. Gentleman will believe that the hungry man would sooner have a crust than a Barmecide's feast.

Passing from these general topics, the hon. Member for the Universities was particularly anxious that we should deal with the matter of habitual drunkenness in relation to the question of husband and wife. I can only say that our minds are quite open on that matter, and if my hon. friend will give us his assistance, recognising, as I am sure he does, that there are certain technical difficulties which prevent the adoption *en bloc* of the provisions of the English Bill, I am sure we shall give the matter our most careful attention. There has been a great deal of criticism of the licensing authority; in particular much has been said about taking away the licensing from the small burghs. The right hon. Gentleman said he was afraid that the Government in general, and my hon. and learned friend and myself in particular, had adopted a curiously circuitous method. I think the right hon. Gentleman has forgotten that the idea of confining the licensing authority to a population of 7,000 and not under is not the creation of the "circuitous mind" of my hon. and learned friend and myself, but the unanimous recommendation of both the Majority and the Minority Reports. Surely that is justification enough for the appearance in the Government Bill of the proposition as it stands. There again I am not, of course, saying what the decision of the Government will be. But obviously that is a question in which we shall invite a free and frank discussion. I should like to say this. The right hon. Gentleman went on to explain how he thought that it was not so much a question of the actual existence of justices of the peace, but that being a non-local man would affect the authority. Throughout the many criticisms made upon the local authority, I have noticed an extraordinary absence of any consideration for the judicial element which ought to exist in a licensing tribunal. Hon. Member after hon. Member—and I include the right hon. Gentleman in this category—have really approached the subject as if the proper conduct of a licensing authority was to have, so to speak, a local authority constituted according to the predominance of persons in a locality of one view or the other, and that in this way the wishes of the locality should be given effect to. [OPPOSITION cries of "No, no."] I am glad to hear murmurs of dissent, and if that is not the view of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, I apologise for having misunderstood him, and I accept his assent to my proposition, which is that there must be a certain element of judicial consideration as to the granting of licences or not. I contend that you are not entitled to go so much according to your own view of what is the proper policy and what are the wishes of the community, but more according to the needs of your neighbours. If that is so, surely the right hon. Gentleman knows enough of the conduct of small communities to know that occasionally upon matters of judicial consideration they need setting right. The right hon. Gentleman did not shrink from what I should call the extreme position of saying that there ought not to be a Court of Appeal at all. I would remind the House after all how very little the Court of Appeal has got to do. If a new licence is refused by the licensing body under the present law, and we do not alter it under this Bill, there is no possibility of making an appeal, and in that way imposing upon that body a licence which they do not want to grant. It is only when you come to the question of the renewal of an existing licence, when you are taking away, I will not use the term "vested interest"—but when you are taking away something from a man which he has already got that he feels aggrieved, and in that case I think he is entitled to come to an Appeal Court. It seems to me that that is just the sort of case where, although local knowledge is good, when you come to the Court of Appeal local knowledge is not everything; but you must have that judicial consideration which you are much more likely to get if you are not absolutely under local control. The right hon. Gentleman went so far as to say that their judgment might be right or wrong, and that at any rate they know the spot. The right hon. Gentleman's view is to let them do as they like.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Yes, if they have the whole of the people of the locality at their back.

*MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: Yes, but it may be that they are backed up with injustice by the people of the locality. Passing to the question of grocers' licences, there again we shall certainly have an open mind in Committee about both the points on which criticism has been passed. As far as the vans provision is concerned, it seems to me that we all have the same object in view, and I would ask hon. Members who criticise the phraseology of the clause as it stands to consider its practical construction, and then they will see how very difficult the point is to meet. So far as that and the other clause which has created so much interest in regard to grocers' licences is concerned, I repeat what I said when I introduced the Bill, namely, that we had no intention of hampering the Trade or making it impossible for that Trade to be carried on in a proper way, as I am certain it is being carried on in a great majority of cases. What we wish to do is to prevent abuses, and so long as the phraseology that we adopt prevents the very obvious abuses which take place, we certainly shall not hamper that trade with any further restrictions. There has been a great deal of comment as to the position of early closing in large cities. That, again, is a point which we shall be perfectly willing and ready to discuss upstairs. I am not, of course, to be taken as giving at this moment the decision of the Government upon any of these matters. We shall certainly wait until we can hear what is said upon both sides. I excuse myself from not even discussing those larger topics of local option and compensation, because in this Bill a discussion of these topics can only be purely academic, and I reserve for the Government the same freedom to accept or reject Amendments as hon. Members have to propose them. I welcome the Second Reading of this Bill, and I am very glad that it has been received with unanimity upon both sides of the House.

SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee) said he desired to thank the Government for introducing this Bill. He was, in his own person, an example of the inefficiency, not to say the impotency, of private Members attempting to deal with questions connected with the liquor traffic. Soon after he entered the House he introduced the Grocers' Licences Abolition (Scotland) Bill and for eight successive years he carefully balloted for that Bill. In the ninth year he thought he had secured the attention of Parliament, for he got the ninth place in the ballot, and he was hoping that they would have a discussion upon a measure in which many of his constituents had expressed great interest. As not uncommonly happened in these circumstances, the Government of the day found it desirable to annex that day, and they deprived him of the chance for which he had waited so long. He had always had the consciousness that it would be difficult for him to secure consideration of his measure. He was glad, however, that in the Bill before the House the question of Grocers' Licences was dealt with. He was only sorry that they were not dealt with in a stronger manner. He would remind the House that fifteen years ago a Royal Commission sat upon this question and examined a large number of witnesses, and they put forward a number of very valuable recommendations. He regretted that the framers of this Bill, while they had adopted two or three of the recommendations of the Royal Commission, had not adopted some dozen others, the whole of which seemed to him to be exceedingly practical, reasonable, and good for the purposes of this Bill and desirable in the interests both of the grocers and of the Trade. He hoped that under the powers and regulations which were proposed it would be possible to schedule if not the whole, the greater number of those recommendations as coming within the purview of the magistrate, authorising them to pass by-laws and resolutions to carry them out. This question of grocers' licences was regarded in Scotland as a most important question because, unfortunately, Scotland had been, for a number of years past, a country where drunkenness had been spreading amongst the female part of the population. Some little time ago he made special inquiries into this subject and obtained from Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as from his own city, figures which he thought would surprise the House, and which he felt sure the House would deplore. In his own constituency of Dundee the number brought up charged with drunkenness in the year 1900 was 1,014 males, as against 815 females; and the charges of breaches of the peace numbered 1,123 males, whilst the number of females charged with the same offence was within two of 700. In Edinburgh and Glasgow the figures were even more lamentable. In Edinburgh the number charged with drunkenness was 2,194 males, and 1,418 females; and the breaches of the peace numbered 1,397 males and 1,672 females. In Glasgow against 7,000 males charged with drunkenness there were 5,000 females, whilst the figures for breaches of the peace were 5,800 males and 2,800 females. All the evidence of the increase of drinking habits amongst the women in Scotland showed that the evil was largely due to the fact that not a few of the licensed grocers' shops did not sell in sealed bottles and were little better than dram shops. A great amount of evidence was brought before the Royal Commission to show that that was the case. Women went into shops and they could not only get drink there, but they could take drink to their houses, and in this insidious manner they acquired drinking habits which did much to destroy the family life and happiness of many homes in Scotland.

He hoped that among other improvements which would be made in the Bill the requirements of the English Act would be extended to Scotland, and that the sale in sealed bottles would be insisted upon. He had always contended that the trades in what were called wet groceries and dry groceries should be entirely separate. Were they to be divided? He would say that the Government, whatever they did, should not give less to Scotland than they had given to England. This remark applied to the separation clause in cases of drunkenness of husbands or wives. He was glad to hear the Lord Advocate say that he had an open mind on that subject. As to the hours of closing, he hoped they would be able, not only to introduce the ten o'clock Clause for the cities which were at present excluded, but that there would be further powers with regard to the limiting of the hours in the beginning of the day as well as at the end of it. He poped also that not merely on New Year's pay, but on a certain number of holidays, hower for general closing would be given. He suggested that it should be in the power of the magistrates to do this, at least six days in the year. There was no reason whatever why extended hours should be given on Saturdays. As a rule, wages were not now paid on Saturday. It was only in a few exceptional cases that they were now paid on Saturday night as before. All the great employers paid their workers on Friday, and there was no reason why the mistress of a house should not do her shopping on Friday night or Saturday morning. With regard to the *bonâ-fide* traveller he thought his real name should be *malâ-fide* traveller. The *bonâ-fide* traveller had been described as nothing but an impostor. He knew a case where there was a ferry, only two miles broad, which was used on Sunday to carry drinkers from a large town to a small village, where they almost indulged in riot. He thought there should be something in the law to prevent clubs being planted capriciously in neighbourhoods where they were not desired. A single club would destroy the peace and happiness of a whole tenement. The Government were to be congratulated upon having indicated that they had an open mind on those points, and he trusted that when the Bill had passed through Committee, that would not only be a good Bill but a considerably better Bill than it was at present.

*MR. HUNTER CRAIG (Lanarkshire, Govan) said he concurred in the opinion expressed by several hon. Members that this was not a Bill which deserved the name of temperance reform, or one which would lessen drunkenness to any extent. Speaking for those who were largely connected with temperance reforms in Scotland, he must express their disappointment, as well as his own, at the meagreness and inadequacy of this measure. It had always been said with reference to temperance reformers that they would either have a whole measure or none, but he thought the course of the debate this afternoon must contradict that view, and show that it was one which was fallacious, because those who desired to see the country improved in sobriety were thankful for any measure of reform, no matter how small, provided it was not retrograde. The present measure did not meet the case. They wanted temperance reform of a drastic nature to remedy the deplorable condition of the country caused by the liquor traffic which was described in the majority Report of the Royal Commission as a gigantic evil, and no sacrifice would be too great to free the country from this national degradation; the signatories to this Report included eight members of the liquor trade. When they considered that no less than £500,000 was spent every day in the United Kingdom on intoxicating liquors, that of this sum £333,000 was spent by the working classes, and that the condition of the people was so grave, it would, he thought, be admitted that it was high time they had a measure consistent with the extent of the incalculable mischief which drink was causing in the country. During the recruiting of soldiers in Manchester for the late war no less than 8,000 out of 11,000 young men who volunteered to serve were rejected as physically unfit to carry a rifle and endure the hardship of discipline. When they thought of the enormous cost to the nation for the maintenance of judicial courts, prisons, penitentiaries, workhouses, hospitals, lunatic asylums, and inebriate homes, it was high time that they should stop this waste of money. The Revenue received £41,000,000 a year from the liquor traffic, but they were simply putting the money into a bag with holes when the consequent cost to the nation caused by the liquor traffic was considered. It would be far better if the money were thrown into the Thames than that it should be spent in intoxicating liquors, producing such disastrous results. He was sorry the Lord Advocate had not introduced the principle of local option into the Bill. Twenty years ago a Resolution was passed in this House by a large majority approving of the principle of local option, and calling for an enactment to give it effect in Scotland. He was sorry to say they had not received that reform. He sincerely hoped that when the Bill went upstairs the Lord Advocate would consent to the ten o'clock restriction being applied to the exempted cities. The Secretary for Scotland received at Edinburgh last week a large deputation including the civil heads of the exempted burghs urging him to give these burghs power to close at 10 p.m. Statements were then made that the worst class of drinking took place between ten and eleven. The Provost of Govan, which burgh is part of my constituency, stated that the greatest amount of drunkenness existed between the hours of ten and eleven o'clock in the burgh. He told the Secretary for Scotland that some 4,500 apprehensions took place during the year, resulting in 3,000 to 4,000 convictions, and that out of this large number there were only 850 sober persons. That happened in a burgh containing 88,000 inhabitants. He was glad to say that they had the principle of local veto established in a district within the burgh of Govan. It contained 6,000 inhabitants and there was not a public-house in that district, with the result that there was practically no crime, one policeman being able to keep the peace, whereas for the same population in the liquor selling districts eight policemen would be the proportion necessary. The hardship of the present law makes it necessary for the community to oppose, at considerable trouble and expense, applications for licences every six months at the Justices' meetings.

It being half-past Seven of the Clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed this evening.

EVENING SITTING.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [6th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Which Amendment was—

"To leave out all the words from the word 'That' to the end of the Question, and add the words 'no measure dealing with licensing reform in Scotland will be satisfactory which fails to include provisions securing direct popular control of the liquor traffic.'"—(*Mr. Ure.*)

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate resumed.

*MR. HUNTER CRAIG resumed his speech. In his opinion the measure simply touched on the fringe of the subject. The remedy was to be found in dealing with causes instead of results, in order to check intoxication and the profligate expenditure of money. With drink shops more numerous than bread shops, studded all over the country, what results could be expected than intoxication? He regretted to see the large increase of drunkenness among women, in some cases the increase extended to 100 per cent. It was lamentable to see in one part of his constituency the number of young women who were falling into drink. It has become a habit with some of them to club together in order to buy a bottle of whiskey and have a carouse among themselves. These conditions of life were deteriorating the physical, mental, and moral life and qualities of our race. Lord Chief Justice Coleridge had said that if England could be made sober three-fourths of our gaols might be closed, and Col. McHardy, the chairman of the Scottish Prisons Commissioners, had said that what was wanted in Scotland was a cure for excessive drinking, and if Scotland could be rid of its drunkenness it would be the first country on the face of the globe. Why should they not have local veto for Scotland, seeing that Scotland was ripe for it? Why should this terrible condition of affairs exist, demoralising our people and incapacitating them in the fight for life? Lord Milner, in introducing a licensing ordinance for the Transvaal, has given local option, and there a majority of votes can prohibit the sale of liquor in their locality. That was a simple solution of the whole affair. It was a question for the people, and ought to be left to the people. A publican was given his licence for one year on the ground that it was for the public good and because the people required it. Surely, then, it was only right for the people to say whether they did or did not want intoxicating liquor shops. Although by the expenditure of large sums of money on licensed premises their value was increased, they knew how the value of other property often deteriorated where licences were granted. As an instance, among many, an adjoining property fell in value £1,600 because of a licence granted, thereby deteriorating the locality. He had heard the sympathetic remarks of the Lord Advocate with those who felt that the Bill did not go far enough, and he was anxious to see it carried through because it went to promote temperance reform in certain directions. He was delighted to believe that the Lord Advocate would relieve the exempted cities from the ten o'clock rule. When this subject was referred to by the deputation at Edinburgh, the Secretary for Scotland expressed himself as being in favour of an hour being allowed off in the morning instead of at night, but he hoped that the Committee would see its way not only to give an hour off at night but also one in the morning. Then with reference to the proportion of two-thirds justices of the peace to one-third county councillors, he sincerely hoped that the portion of popular control would be so increased that the numbers would be reversed. In some parts of the Bill reference was made to the licensing authority, and in others to the licensing court, but he was glad to learn from Lord Balfour of Burleigh that he did not attach any importance to that change, which was very much a matter of words. Then with reference to the hawking of liquor. He knew for a fact that liquor vans were sent out, and even if the liquor had not been ordered the vanman was supplied with a pass-book containing the names of customers, with a quantity of liquor attached to each name, even although none had been ordered. He hoped the Lord Advocate would consider the proposal that no liquor should be supplied without a signed and dated order. Would it, he wondered, be possible to make the sale of the goodwill of a public house illegal? If that could be done it would certainly prevent disappointment on the part of those who paid large sums of money should they be deprived of their licences. As the Bill was to be referred to a Committee upstairs he would not move the Amendment standing in his name.

Sir ANDREW AGNEW (Edinburgh, S.) thought there had been so many speeches made on the Bill that little remained to be said. As representing a large Scottish burgh which had taken a great interest in the measure he wished to say that the feeling of his constituents in favour of the Bill was as unanimous as it had been expressed in the House. He had received a large number of letters, and alterations had been suggested in the Bill, but in no case had disapproval been expressed of the Bill as a whole, and that was a very remarkable circumstance in the case of a licensing Bill. Many of the letters were from licensed grocers, and he was glad to have the assurance of the Lord Advocate that upon this subject the Government had an open mind and would listen to all arguments that might be put before the Committee. He felt that if the Bill were to pass in its present form a serious loss would be inflicted upon a number of respectable tradesmen without any corresponding gain. The only objection that had been raised to the Bill was that it did not go far enough. It certainly did not deal with various matters of a highly controversial character, and to his mind that was a strong thing in its favour. The great merit of the Bill was that it embodied a number of reforms of which all approved, whilst it was approved both by the temperance party and by those engaged in the liquor trade. He sympathised with the hon. Member for East Renfrewshire in the view he took of compensation. That was a subject with which the Government had to deal as soon as possible, but it was not one to be embodied in the present measure. Having regard to the Irish Land Bill and the London Education Bill there was no chance of a licensing measure dealing with compensation and other controversial matters being passed into law this session, but he earnestly hoped that this Bill with its reforms would be placed on the Statute Book.

THE MASTER OF ELIBANK (Edinburgh, Midlothian) asked the Lord Advocate to consider the provision dealing with Royal Burghs and thought that he might be permitted to say a word or two for his native town of Peebles. The House was doubtless familiar with the old saying, "Peebles for pleasure," but he imagined that this Bill would not convey any great pleasure to the magistrates of that town. Both Selkirk and Peebles, capitals of their respective counties, would have their privileges taken away, whereas a small burgh in Fife, with a population of 7,000 and a valuation of only a little more than one half of that of Selkirk or of Peebles, would become a licensing authority. Peebles, on the other hand, would be governed by the county, which could not be said to have the same close knowledge of the needs and desires of the locality. He proposed to place an Amendment on the Paper dealing with this subject, and he trusted that in due course it would receive favourable attention from the Lord Advocate. In the meantime he welcomed the Bill as a statesmanlike effort to grapple with the drink problem in Scotland.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith Burghs) said he would not have intervened in the debate but for the fact that the Bill was to be sent upstairs to a Committee, and unless one could follow it there he would not even be able to follow the fortunes of Peebles. The question of popular control had occupied the attention of many of them in years gone by and they all knew that there could never be a satisfactory system of control of the liquor traffic without that element. The only reason to be urged in favour of the postponement was that the great increase in value of the licensed trade during the last ten or fifteen years had proved to be a natural incentive for the Trade to safeguard its own interests and had rendered it likely for small popularly elected authorities to be laid open to the influence of the Trade. Beyond that he knew of no reason why even small areas should not control their liquor traffic. In Scandinavia they had a system which worked admirably, and under similar conditions he saw no reason why one on similar lines should not work well in Scotland. There was a great deal of force in the argument that the licensing authority should be formed from a Committee of the Town Councils or the County Councils. He saw no reason for the necessity of retaining the element of justices of the peace, and although he would not attempt to deny that a good licensing body could be formed out of the justices of a county, he recognised that it was the number of that class which reduced the control of the granting of licences to a farce. There was a great majority of opinion in that House in favour of popular election of those entrusted with the control of the liquor traffic, and therefore he naturally preferred Committees of the County Councils or Town Councils to the nominated authorities who would form the major part of the licensing authority under this Bill. Dealing with the reduction of licences he thought the institution of the time limit was by far the most pressing part of the whole licensing question before the House.

Since the Licensing Bill was introduced they had had the remarkable speech of the Prime Minister in answer to the brewers' deputation, and the far more remarkable speech of the Lord Chancellor in another place in dealing with the actions of the justices in England. Admonitions had been addressed to the highest authorities, and the benches of justices in England had been practically directed not to pursue the policy of the reduction of licences. The justices of England had not hitherto been regarded as a peculiarly revolutionary body, and yet it had been thought necessary for the Lord Chancellor to admonish them for defending the public interests, and for the Government to defend the publican. The whole arguments of the Prime Minister and the Lord Chancellor were directed towards showing the hardships the owners of licences would suffer if any licence were lost to them under this scheme of general reduction, and yet, in spite of those arguments, they had a Bill for Scotland with no provision for the reduction of licences, and no provision for a time limit, which only, under the arguments of the Prime Minister and the Lord Chancellor, would render that reduction possible. Were there to be no further reductions of licences in Scotland? That appeared to be the only logical alternative. Was the licence, therefore, to become the equivalent to private property? That, at any rate, had never been recognised in Scotland. Therefore the question of having a time limit was necessary if the element of any money compensation was to be brought forward. He failed to see how they could deal with the question of money compensation until they had fixed the time limit. In Lord Peel's Report the limit was made five years. He did not consider that sufficient, and would rather support the suggestion of seven years. He did not know that he should hold up his hands in horror if, as in Mr. Bruce's Bill, it was ten years. They had waited thirty-three years—a generation—since the introduction of Mr. Bruce's Bill in 1871, and he did not think it was possible for another generation to pass away without some more effective means being found to reduce order out of the chaos of the licensing system. The matter of compensation was pre-eminently a matter for compromise and arrangement. He believed this was a favourable opportunity for making that arrangement. Public opinion was ready for it; the power of the justices was absolute.

With regard to the constitution of the Appeal Courts under the Bill, he wished to point out that they were strong authorities and must have considerable areas. He felt the greatest sympathy for many of the small Royal Burghs, and there was no county so full of them as that in which he resided. He could not, however, but recognise the fact that they were to have a strong authority, and they must be composed of representatives of considerable populations. He did not hesitate to say that he was in favour of even a higher line than that fixed by the Bill, and thought a limit of a 20,000 population would not be too high if they provided for strong authorities by forming committees of town and county councillors. He thought that the number should be rather less than that nominated by the Bill. If they had these strong authorities in large areas and with the security of the time limit, so that there would be no cause of complaint on the part of the Trade against any rapid change of policy on the part of the new authorities, then the Appeal Courts would be abolished. He saw no reason for Appeal Courts. They would certainly simplify the operation of the Bill and remove the most cumbrous part of it if they were to take out the provisions relating to the Appeal Courts. So far as the time allowance, the reduction of licences, and the rendering of the licensing authorities stronger through abolishing the Appeal Courts were concerned, they might all follow the same road, whatever might be their views as to the ultimate arrangement of the licensing authority. For his own part, it was to the elimination of private property in the liquor traffic that they had to look if they were to have a thoroughly sound system of licensing in Scotland. He was encouraged in that view by the provision of the Transvaal law, in which Lord Milner had provided that a locality desiring to control the liquor traffic through a trust company would do so by a petition to the Government. No doubt all of them had made concessions of their opinions in giving their support to the Bill as it stood. He should be very sorry to see the Bill lost, and therefore he should be unable to support such an Amendment as that moved by the hon. Member for Linlithgow. If they were ready to make concessions, it was not because they considered that the Bill was the best, and because they did not lay stress on such points as he had ventured to commend to the attention of the House, but because of their earnest desire to free themselves from the shackles of chaos of their present licensing system, and to make some effective effort to deal with the degradation that it involved upon local and Imperial interests, and the degradation it involved upon the great mass of their people.

MR. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy Burgh) expressed his regret that the right hon. Gentleman, in the favourable opportunity which he now had of dealing with this troublesome licensing question, had not ventured to settle the matter on a permanent basis. In the course of the speech of the Solicitor-General he was amazed to hear the declaration that he did not claim that the Bill would settle the question in Scotland. It was safe to say that in no period of the history of this country had the Government a better opportunity for settling the question satisfactorily to the Scotch people. The appalling figures read out by the hon. Member for Dundee and the hon. Member for Govan showed that the social evil was one which it would be dangerous to the national life of Scotland to leave untouched for any long period. The Government, admitting the evil, and with all the support of their followers and that of the Opposition, had an opportunity of doing anything that was reasonable to solve the question, and yet they said this was a harmless little Bill. From beginning to end there was no real living clause in the Bill. It would not be final; it merely dealt with machinery. So far as it gave control to the people it would be popular, but, unfortunately, the tendency of the Bill was to limit the authority they now had. Was the proposal to take the control of licences out of the hands of Royal Burghs with under 7,000 inhabitants a step in the direction of local control? When Town Councils were elected, the qualifications of the committee of magistrates were often canvassed as to how far they would be prepared to grant or refuse new licences. In many cases that was the dominating feature of the election. The proposal now made would not make that election more democratic. It could not be contended that the magistrates had not discharged their duties with satisfaction to the community. In the small burghs the magistrates represented the highest quality of the citizens. There was no real reason advanced for the change, and the result would be that the power of dealing with licences would be handed over to a body of men, the majority of whom knew nothing of the local requirements. He protested against the provisions on this matter in the Bill, and hoped that the Committee would be able to convince the right hon. Gentleman that there was good ground for removing such provisions. If the Government would take the opinion of Scotland with regard to the Bill he should be perfectly content. The Bill did not go as far as they wished; it merely danced round the question of providing machinery. The test of the measure would be the extent to which the Government recognised the feeling of Scotland. If they did that the Bill would pass in such a condition as would afford some chance of settling the temperance question in Scotland.

MR. BAIRD (Glasgow, Central) said that although the evil condition of the question was one of long growth, and although it was true that desperate diseases required desperate remedies, in dealing with this particular disease they should act slowly. He sympathised with the hon. Member for Midlothian in regard to the small Royal Burghs, but they must remember that they were not dealing with ancient monuments. The reason why there had been so little debate and so much discussion was because they were all agreed, both inside and outside of the House. One hon. Member had spoken rather hardly of grocers. In his view some of them were amongst the best people in Edinburgh.

MR. URE asked leave to withdraw his Motion.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

*MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY moved that the Bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Trade.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

SIR ROBERT REID (Dumfries Burghs) moved as an Amendment—that the Bill be referred to a Committee consisting of all the members representing Scottish constituencies, together with fifteen other members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection, and that the proceedings of such Committee shall for the purpose of this Bill have the same effect as the proceedings of a Standing Committee on Law or Trade, and shall be conducted under the same procedure and rules. He complained that the Lord Advocate had made the Motion in a very summary fashion, without putting forward any reasons for it. He deprecated the proposal, and would endeavour to show that the course he (Sir Robert Reid) suggested, was much more desirable in the interests of the House. It would certainly show more respect to the Scotch Members who desired to follow the Bill through all its stages. Early in 1894 a proposal was made by the late Government that there should be a Standing Committee consisting of Scotch Members and fifteen other Members, to which all purely Scotch business should be referred. That was discussed and passed, and certain Bills were with great advantage referred to that Committee. Formidable arguments were addressed by the present Prime Minister against that proposal, and it was described as containing the seed of the dissolution of the British Empire, and the breaking up of the United Kingdom. He rather thought that a calmer spirit prevailed now. He had always been, and would remain, a firm and constant supporter of the principle of devolution of business, without which, he felt satisfied, firstly, that the business of the country would not be wisely transacted; secondly, that the interests represented in that House would not be adequately represented; and thirdly, that the feeling of the people who sent them there would not be properly enforced.

His Motion, however, did not deal with those points; it related only to this particular Bill, and it was justified on purely and simply business grounds. The character and complexion of the Bill was that it dealt with a subject vital to the welfare of Scotchmen. The figures quoted in the debate showed that the evil was a frightful one. No one could contest that, and nothing could be more eloquent to prove it than the tone of the debate and the extreme earnestness with which hon. Members on both sides had spoken. No man in the House took a more serious view of the Bill than he did. It dealt with the health, and the permanence of the mental, moral, and physical condition of the people of Scotland. He thought everybody would agree that knowledge and familiarity with the evils themselves, and with the sense and judgment of the people as regarded the way in which those evils ought to be remedied, was almost confined to Scotch Members. [MINISTERIAL cries of "No, no."] He did not wish to set up that Scotch Members were better than any other hon. Members, but they knew this subject most fully. He did not think that hon. Gentlemen from England and Wales would contend that they were better, or as well, acquainted with the peculiar manner in which these evils pressed upon Scotland, nor with the deep feeling the people had for a remedy. Scotch Members knew the peculiar way in which these evils struck their country. It would not be disputed that the feeling of Scotch constituencies would be better and more faithfully and accurately represented by Scotch Members than by English or Irish Members. Every hon. Member for Scotland had had this subject thoroughly threshed out at the last election, and no hon. Member came to this House from a Scotch constituency without knowing the feeling of his constituents from every point of view upon this subject, or without having given his own opinion upon it. The Standing Committee on Trade contained only ten Scotch Members out of seventy-two. He was aware that there might be fifteen more added by the Committee of Selection. As a matter of fact, there would be some nominations from England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. Did they suppose that Scotland would get half that representation? [MINISTERIAL cries of "No, no."] Suppose Scotland got the whole of that representation, that would mean twenty-five out of seventy-two. He appealed to hon. Gentlemen opposite to say if they thought that was right. There was not a Scotch Member in the House who did not take the deepest interest in this Bill, and who did not want to take part in the discussions, in order to satisfy himself and his constituency in reference to it.

His hon. friend had spoken about the small burghs, but he would remind his hon. friend that he at present represented a fraction of a great city which did not exist at the time when some of the small burghs he alluded to returned Members of Parliament. Let at least the small burghs subsist, and be able to exercise the functions they had always enjoyed. On the Standing Committee on Trade they would see hon. Members representing Glasgow, Leeds, and Birmingham sitting together with the representatives of some of the counties of England who knew nothing of Scotland, or of Scottish corporate life and traditions. In 1894, when this point was raised upon the general question of a regular Standing Committee, a great deal was made of the difficulty that the majority of the House would not find its reflex on the Committee. He was sorry to see that a deplorable change had occurred in the balance of the representation. He wished to point out that the presence of the Scotch Members on this Committee would prevent the possibility of the Government losing their much cherished majority. But there was another practical convenience. Supposing they had only twenty-five Scotch Members out of seventy-two. The result would be that the proceedings on report would be protracted. The whole question would have to be re-opened by the thirty-seven hon. Members from Scotland who would be compulsorily absent from the Committee, and they were bound to be heard in the House. It was true that they would not be able to speak more than once. He could understand the Government wishing to escape the presence of Scotch Members if they thought for a moment that their presence was likely to retard the passage of the Bill. He did not think any of them were for obstructing Scottish measures, and still less were they likely to do it in regard to a Bill which they all sincerely desired in many features to be added to the Statute Book.

He could not understand what was the object of the right hon. Gentleman in sending this Bill to the Standing Committee on Trade. He moved his resolution as a business proposal for the purpose of dealing with this particular measure in the most satisfactory way to the people of Scotland and to the Government themselves. He wished to make an appeal to hon. Gentlemen opposite who represented Scotland, for there was nothing dangerous in his proposal, which was purely a mere business one. Hon. Members opposite who represented Scotland would suffer just as much as hon. Members on the opposite side by being excluded from this Committee, and they knew their constituents would be dissatisfied. What reason was there why they should not endeavour to get the Government to give reasonable facilities for discussing this Bill in the same spirit and manner which had been exhibited fully in the course of this debate. If this were done he believed they would be able to contribute something towards making this measure a substantial reform of a most serious danger to which Scotland was at the present moment exposed. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the words 'the Standing Committee on Trade, etc.,' and add the words 'a Committee consisting of all the Members representing Scottish constituencies, together with fifteen other Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection.'"—(*Sir Robert Reid.*)

Question proposed "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: The hon. and learned Gentleman opposite has put this proposition as being something different from what was done in the year 1894, and he is very anxious to assure us that he does not wish to repeat that experiment. The hon. and learned Member in putting forward this Motion has taken particular care to assure us that he himself was always in favour of devolution from this House in every way possible. In this matter my memory is not quite so short, and when I hear these protestations I cannot help remembering how very little support we got from hon. Gentlemen opposite in regard to the Private Legislation Bill which we passed through this House not long ago.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: There was no opposition from this side at all.

*MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: I know the right hon. Gentleman has very curious views about what is opposition, but perhaps I may say that there was very little help.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The opposition came from the right hon. Gentleman's own friends.

*MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: The right hon. Gentleman appears to have forgotten another chapter of the history of this subject. He forgets that the same proposition he has made for the establishment of a general Scotch standing Committee referring a single Bill to Scotch Members was made in the year 1897 by the hon. Member for Aberdeenshire in respect of a Public Health Bill.

SIR ROBERT REID said he was aware of that question, but the application in that case was not to apply the procedure or effect of a Grand Committee to a Committee that was then selected. It was stated by Mr. Speaker Peel that the proposal was to refer it to a Select Committee, which would involve a further Committee Stage in this House, and upon that the right hon. Gentleman expended a great deal of humour and satire. I make my proposal in such a form that it will have the same effect as the proceedings of a Grand Committee.

*MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: The proposition of the hon. and learned Member is precisely the same. Let me come now to the merits of the matter. Why is this measure to be treated differently from any other Bill? Why does the hon. and learned Member say that this is a Bill in which only Scotch Members are interested? I hope they are interested in every other Scotch Bill that is brought before the House, and yet the hon. Member does not go the length of proposing that every other Bill should be referred to a Committee of this kind. The hon. and learned Member forgets the whole principle upon which Standing Committees are formed, and he forgets the very reason why the House parted with the control it otherwise had over a Bill. If we refer a Bill to a Select Committee the House gets back the control because it has to come back through a Committee Stage of the whole House. The only reason that the House consented to give up its control, by saying that a Bill from a Standing Committee or a Grand Committee, should not come back to the Committee Stage, was because those Standing Committees were to be made microcosms of the House. There is not the slightest warrant in the practical experience of the last nine years for any such proposition as this which has now been made. The Public Health Bill was a great deal more technical than this Bill, for we had to deal with the most intricate questions of rating, which I venture to say many Scotch Members are not thoroughly conversant with. There are no such questions dealt with in this measure, and unquestionably any Scotch Member can give his own view. I think on a question of general principle you are more likely to get a sound judgment from a mixed Committee than you are from people whose tails can be particularly twisted. The experience of the last nine years is distinctly against the hon. and learned Member, and his present proposition is entirely subversive of the methods by which this House conducts its business; and it would form a most inconvenient precedent, because I do not know how it can possibly apply to England or to Ireland. By proposing that this Bill shall go to the Standing Committee on Trade, I am suggesting that it should go to the same Committee which disposed of the English Bill. [AN HON. MEMBER: The English Members had a representation of about sixty out of seventy-two.] I thought this was a question of exclusiveness, but it now appears to be a sort of "who dares to meddle with me?" The precedent now sought to be set up would make business in this House unworkable. It might happen that the Scotch Members on the side of the Government would be in a minority. An hon. Member opposite cheers that statement, but he forgets that if they had applied the position to England hon. Members opposite could not have got a single measure passed in Committee during the whole of the years they were in office, and I am sure that would not have suited them. As a Scotsman I object to being labelled as a sort of by-product of civilisation which cannot be mixed either with Englishmen or Irishmen, and the proposal put before the House is one which would be entirely subversive of the methods by which the affairs of this House must be conducted if we are to proceed according to our rules, and according to the rules under which Standing Committees are formed.

MR. BUCHANAN (Perthshire, E.) said he thought Scotch Members must have listened with astonishment to some of the arguments put forward by the learned Lord Advocate, particularly when he said that to refer this Bill for consideration to a Committee consisting mainly of Scotch Members would render the business of this House unworkable. Could anything be more preposterous than an argument like that. Various statements had been made by the Lord Advocate, who had accepted the favourable comments made upon his Bill, and stated that he would preserve an open mind upon the various arguments which had been adduced; and although he would not go so far as to accept public opinion upon some points, led them to believe that he kept an open mind for Scottish opinion upon these subjects. The Lord Advocate knew perfectly well that if this Bill was to be anything like a suitable measure, which would be accepted for any length of time as even a partial solution of the questions involved, it must be passed through this House fairly, and with the expressed approval of the Scotch Members in this House. That was the object they had in view—namely, that he should get the fullest expression of opinion that was possible for him to get from the various sections of Scottish opinion in this House. It was to be regretted that the Government would not accept the very moderate proposition put forward by the hon. and learned Member for Dumfries. How was the Grand Committee on Trade constituted? It consisted of sixty-eight Members, of whom fifty-eight were English and Irish, who, it was within the common knowledge of the House, took practically no interest whatever in the details of a Scotch Bill. Very few English Members had troubled to listen to their debate that evening; indeed only one had sat throughout it, and he was a somewhat new Member of the House, and the interest in the case of new Members was prone to last a very short time indeed. The Lord Advocate had asked if it were suggested that Englishmen and Irishmen were so stupid that they did not understand the language in which these Scotch Bills were debated. Without going so far as to say that, he must repeat that they had difficulty in understanding conditions which obtained in Scottish districts. The details of this Bill should be discussed by a Committee in which Scottish opinion should have a reasonable chance of prevailing, and not by a Committee the vast majority of the members of which did not care about the subject at all. Suppose fifteen extra Scottish Members were placed on the Committee. They would then have a Scottish element equal to one-fourth of the total membership, and one which constituted only one-third of the Scottish representation in the House of Commons. Thus two out of every three Scottish Members would be precluded from taking a substantial part in the debates on the details of that measure. That, he asserted, amounted to depriving the Scottish Members of their constitutional right to express their opinion as part of the governing body which had to determine the details of the Bill.

He would like to point out the importance, in view of the need for shortening the business of the House of the present session, of accepting the proposal of his hon. and learned friend. The debate which had taken place that afternoon had disclosed the fact that the chief points of difference between hon. Members were on matters of detail, and they wanted not merely the opinion of the House as a whole upon important amendments but they also desired to arrive at the opinions of Scotch Members themselves. For instance there was the proposal to take away from Royal Burghs the power they at present possessed of exercising their magisterial duties as a licensing authority. Were the representatives of these Royal Burghs going to be content with anything less than a decision on that subject from the whole body of Scottish Members? But they could not get a decision of that character from the Grand Committee on Trade and consequently the whole question would have to be redebated by the House itself. Other and equally important points were the constitution of the Court of Appeal and the veto to be given to the Lord Advocate in regard to the making of licensing by-laws. There were details as to which the average Englishman and Irishman cared nothing and consequently if they were to arrive at a decision which would be satisfactory to the Scottish people they must have the votes on them of the whole body of Scottish representatives in that House. That could not be accomplished under the proposal of the Lord Advocate, but it could be secured by accepting the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for Dumfries.

SIR CHARLES RENSHAW reminded the hon. Member that a Bill of an almost exactly similar character was sent to the Grand Committee on Trade last year, and on that occasion no objection was raised by English Members to Scottish Members taking a full part in the discussions. He regarded the proposal of the hon. and learned Member for Dumfries Burghs as an innovation of the most serious character. The underlying principle of the Grand Committees was that they should be constituted on the basis of a microcosm of the whole House, and in his opinion it was extremely undesirable to establish a system of nationalities in regard to these Committees. If such a proposal as was now before the House were admitted in reference to this Bill it would be made on other occasions in regard to other measures, and the result would be that they would create a great difficulty in connection with the whole subject of Grand Committees. The English Licensing Bill of 1902 was referred to the Grand Committee on Trade, and in his opinion that precedent should be followed in the case of the Scotch Bill. He was perfectly certain it would receive fair treatment at the hands of such a Committee, and he did not think the discussions need be carried on in such a way as to lead to protracted debates.

MR. EUGENE WASON reminded the hon. Baronet opposite, who had referred to the precedent of last year, that, though there were some Scotch Members on the Grand Committee when the English Licensing Bill was sent up to it last session, there was a predominant majority of English opinion upon it. He could not see any objection to the acceptance of the Amendment. The present Bill was a purely Scotch Bill, and he was at a loss to understand why any English Member, or any Scotchman representing an English constituency, should wish to interfere with it. The only way in which they could get the Bill made satisfactory and acceptable to the Scotch people was to have it threshed out by such a Committee as was suggested by his hon. and learned friend; and he therefore heartily supported his Motion.

SIR J. STIRLING-MAXWELL agreed with hon. Members opposite as to the want of interest and knowledge with which English Members treated Scottish questions. Only two or three minutes previously an hon. Member near him asked if that was an important Bill. But however much interest they might take in Scottish affairs, he held that hon. Members from Scotland had some reason to dislike the idea of being excluded from the Committee Stage on this Bill. They did not have a great deal of exclusively Scottish legislation brought before the House; and in view of the fact that the Lord Advocate had that afternoon admitted that the Government were prepared to very considerably alter and even remodel the Bill on the Committee Stage, he would be sorry to see any Scottish Member precluded from taking an active part in the debates if he so desired. But he could not see his way to voting for the Amendment. If the Leader of the House said it was impossible for him to accept it, then he would bow to his ruling on this subject; but it seemed to him the Motion might be accepted with the proviso that the addition of other than Scottish Members should be such as to bring the proportion of parties up to that which existed in the House, and that it should not be considered that the Government of the day were pledged by precedent to send Bills of this kind to the Grand Committee Speaking as a representative of a Scottish constituency, and remembering how little of the time of Parliament had been devoted to Scottish affairs during the last two years, he held that this Bill, if not sent to a Scottish Committee, should be considered in Committee of the whole House.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN hoped that the speech of the hon. Member would bring some balm to the spirit of the Prime Minister and his colleagues. What an exemplary Member his hon. friend was! Having explained his own opinions with great force, and at considerable length——

Sir J. STIRLING-MAXWELL: I only spoke two or three minutes.

Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said the hon. Member, having explained his own opinion, put himself most courageously and publicly in the pocket of the Prime Minister, and said he was prepared, notwithstanding his personal views, to bow to the ruling of the right hon. Gentleman. The Prime Minister might say *O si sic omnia*, because there had been on some occasions so little of that spirit in the part of the House which the hon. Gentleman adorned. The proposal in the Motion was a most temperate one, designed for business purposes only, and with no underlying scheme to subvert the established order or gain a party advantage. It was a mere question of ascertaining by a great experiment whether this was a good way of conducting Scottish business. The Grand Committee was spoken of as if it were a part of the ancient constitution of the country, whereas many present Members of the House could remember when the system was first set up. The whole procedure and arrangement of Grand Committees were not yet out of the experimental stage, and it would surely be a good thing, if only as an experiment, to make a trial of this mode of dealing with a Scottish Bill, which excited no party spirit and was essentially a measure in regard to which it was desirable to enlist the knowledge and interest of all Scottish Members. The supporter of the Motion desired that the details of the Bill should be settled by men who knew Scotland, and not by men from Piccadilly and the Strand. It was not only that this Bill was a Scottish Bill, but the system to which it was sought to be applied in Scotland differed materially from the English system; and there was sufficient likeness, and at the same time sufficient difference, to cause considerable confusion in the English mind. For instance, much had been said about magistrates and what they did in burghs. English Members would naturally think that they were the same as were known in England as borough magistrates, and would not have the slightest idea that they were bailies — a different sort of animal altogether. They were purely elective functionaries, resting on the will of the people, appointed by the people, and removable by the people. He was amazed to hear the Lord Advocate taunt his hon. and learned friend on the question of devolution, and ask where was his love of devolution at the time of the Private Business Bill. Why, it was the present Opposition who almost forced that Bill on the Government. He himself, before the Lord Advocate was a Member of the House, persuaded Mr. W. H. Smith practically to adopt the system of proceeding by Provisional Orders, and it was only because, when it became known that the tide was setting in that direction, the railway directors and that class of the community exerted their influence, the scheme was abandoned for the time. That was the very proposal the Government finally adopted, so that the Opposition always regarded it as their child, and assisted it in every possible way, the objections and hostile amendments coming from behind the right hon. Gentleman. The Scotch Members had no intention of thwarting the Bill; but they felt that in a matter of this kind very closely affecting the life of the people of Scotland, they might very well, without creating any precedent, make this experiment. He believed the result would be a very much better Bill than would be obtained with a wretched twenty-five Scotch Members on the Committee in the face of forty-three strangers and outlanders, who knew nothing about the existing law or the circumstances of the country for which they were legislating.

The PRIME MINISTER and FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.) said he w s rather shocked by the epithet he right hon. Gentleman had applied to a fraction of his countrymen. After all, a wretched twenty-five Scotch Members——

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: It is the number that is wretched.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said twenty-five was more than one-third of the whole representation of Scotland, and he was not aware that the English representation on any Committee amounted to a third of the English representation in the House. If it was contended that there must be a majority of Scotch Members on a Committee that dealt with Scotch Bills, the parallel argument was irresistible; but he had never heard it argued that there must be a Welsh majority for a Welsh Bill, or an English majority for an English Bill.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: You can put all the Welsh Members in a Committee of that sort. You cannot put more than there are. As to English Members, they are always in a majority on every Committee.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said that Grand Committees must either be formed as they were now or turned into national bodies in which the nationality concerned had a majority. He would not argue which system was right, as he had done that at length on previous occasions, but he would urge the House not to make an experiment in the case of a Bill which was not a party Bill and only applied to Scotland, because it would be sought in the future to apply the precedent to Bills which were party Bills and applied to other parts of the kingdom. The right hon. Gentleman had fallen into a fallacy in supposing that, because this was a non-party Bill, therefore the present was a suitable occasion for altering the rules of the House, and turning the Grand Committees into national assemblies. The reverse was the case. If the general principle could not be adopted for all Bills, controversial and uncontroversial, let them not try it in a case in which it was likely to work well, but a case in which he also thought a Committee from which all Scotch Members were excluded, would work equally well. This was a Bill for the consideration of which a general knowledge of the system under which they all lived was better than knowledge of the difference between English and Scotch law, and he had no doubt that a purely Welsh or Irish Committee would deal very well with it. By his own admission the right hon. Gentleman proposed to start a new experiment. Let them not start it in a case where it would test nothing. How would the experiment help the House to form a judgment as to whether they ought to make a fundamental alteration in the system which had prevailed ever since Grand Committees were established? The right hon. Gentleman observed quite truly that the Grand Committee system was still on its trial, and that it was not a part of the original constitution of these realms; and no Gentleman need consider himself an iconoclast or revolutionary if he thought the system might be modified. But to start an experiment in modification in a Bill which would give no valuable results was surely a very poor and unsatisfactory way of dealing with a constitutional problem. It was true that the feeling of the various nationalities in the House was now less intense than it had been at other times; but could anybody guarantee that this was going to last? The experiment proposed was an experiment with the constitution of the House, and this House had lasted and would last through many revolutions of feeling. It would be a perfectly insane policy to start in connection with a Bill which aroused no party feeling and no particular national sentiment, a system which had to stand the strain, or what might be the overwhelming strain, of both strong party feeling and strong national sentiment. From one observation the right hon. Gentleman made, he appeared to regret that the settlement of any Scotch matter should be left to persons who hailed from Piccadilly and the Strand. Did the right hon. Gentleman and himself hail from Piccadilly and the Strand, or from the Highlands or Lowlands of Scotland? They had both a great deal to say to a great many questions—English, Scotch, Irish, and Welsh. Were they incapable of dealing with these questions? He was unwilling to admit this disability on his own part.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: It is a question of constituency more than of birth, of Scottish Members and not of Scotsmen.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said that in that case he was disqualified from dealing with Scotch questions because he represented an English constituency, and the right hon. Gentleman was disqualified from dealing with English questions because he represented a Scotch constituency. That was a serious admission for the right hon. Gentleman to have made, and, if he might speak as his sincere friend and admirer, not one he ought to have made. They were all representatives of individual constituencies, but representatives, not of nationalities, but of those constituencies in a House in which all nationalities were represented. He absolutely refused to accept the view that hon. Gentlemen representing Scotch constituencies could not give an opinion worth having on English, Irish, or Welsh questions. If there had been no Scotch question arising but that of Scotch trout for two years, ought the right hon. Gentleman to have felt himself precluded from discussing anything but Scotch trout for these two years? He regarded the Leader of the Opposition as occupying a great constitutional position wholly irrespective of the fact that he was a Scotchman or represented a Scotch constituency. Let them avoid driving to excess these international divisions. It was most important to have personal and technical knowledge on the subjects which went before the Grand Committees; but there was ample room and verge enough for that technical and personal knowledge on these Grand Committees; and the essence of their system was that it brought to bear on their deliberations not merely personal and technical knowledge, but long experience in the general conduct of public affairs and in dealing with principles which, whether the details were provincial or national, belonged in their particular essence to the general polity of the country. Let them give the fullest representation to Scottish opinion on the Committee, and see that the Committee had the fullest benefit of Scottish local knowledge; but let them not start a policy which, however innocuous it might prove on the present occasion, could not fail to be a precedent in times to come—possibly stormy times—which would land the House in serious difficulties and serious embarrassments.

MR. DALZIEL said the Prime Minister was quite inaccurate in suggesting that this was a new experiment. The proposal was tried some years ago and worked very well. In 1894, he believed, a Committee consisting of the whole of the Scottish Members with fifteen other Members added by the Committee of Selection had referred to it the Local Government Bill and the Fatal Accidents Bill, and the success of the experiment justified its proposal now, when it was desired to enable Scottish opinion to dominate the settlement of a purely Scottish Bill. The right hon. Gentleman asked how other countries were to be dealt with. As to that, so far as the Committee on Trade was concerned, the Scottish Members were ten out of sixty-eight, so that English opinion was absolutely predominant. It was an entirely false argument to say that the proposal should not be accepted in the present case because this Bill was of a non-contentious character. Party measures were not sent to the Standing Committees at all. The only Bills so dealt with were those the principle of which was accepted in the House. He maintained that if ever there was a measure which ought to be sent to a Committee such as was proposed it was the Bill before the House. It was a measure which Scottish Members anxiously desired to improve; and regarding which Scottish Members had received more communications than they had in connection with any other measure during the last eight or ten years. How were they to bring forward suggested Amendments unless the Bill were sent to a Committee? They could not properly amend the Bill at the fag end of the Session, when the Government wanted every minute of the time. The plain truth was that the English Members would be quite content to leave the Bill to the consideration of the Scottish Members. During the afternoon only two English Members were in the House, one a very young Member, the other the Deputy-Speaker, and he was not quite sure that the Deputy - Speaker would have been present were it not for his official position. The Bill affected Scotland only;

and the Lord Advocate would admit that in its consideration Scottish opinion would be of very great use. If the Bill were handed over to the Committee which was proposed, there would still be fifteen Members representing other parties in the House. This was not an Imperial question. It was not an English, or an Irish, or a Welsh question. It was entirely a Scottish question; and in its consideration Scottish opinion ought to predominate.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 121; Noes, 51. (Division List No. 58.)

AYES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Arrol, Sir William
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Baird, John George Alexander
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Manch'r*
Balfour, RtHnGeraldW (*Leeds*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bhownaggree, Sir M. M.
Bignold, Arthur
Bill, Charles
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Campbell, Rt Hn J A (*Glasg.*)
Cavendish, V. C. W. (*Derbyshire*
Cecil, Evelyn (*Aston Manor*)
Chamberlain, Rt Hon J (*Birm*
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Chaplin, Right Hon. Henry
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Cochrane, Hon. Thos H. A. E.
Corbett, A. Cameron (*Glasgow*)
Corbett, T. L. (*Down North*)
Cox, Irwin Edward Bainbridge
Cranborne, Viscount
Crossley, Sir Savile
Cubitt, Hon. Henry
Dalkeith, Earl of
Davenport, William Bromley
Dickson, Charles Scott
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt. Hon Sir William Hart
Fellowes, Hn. Ailwyn Edward
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fitzroy, Hon. Edw. Algernon
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Galloway, William Johnson
Gardner, Ernest
Godson, Sir Augustus Frederick
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (*Elgin & Nrn*
Gore, Hn. S. F. Ormsby- (*Linc*
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Eldon
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Greene, Hy. D. (*Shrewsbury*)
Gretton, John
Hall, Edward Marshall
Hamilton, Rt Hn Ld. G. (*Midx*
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Heath, James (*Staffs., N. W.*)
Henderson, Sir Alexander
Hope, J. F. (*Sheffield Brightside*
Jameson, Major J. Eustace
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop.*
Keswick, William
Lambton, Hon. Fredk. Wm.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Glasgow)
Lawson, John Grant
Lee, A. H. (*Hants, Fareham*)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Frederick N. S.
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Bristol, S)
Lowe, Francis William
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*)
Lucas, Reginald J. (*Portsmouth*
Macdona, John Cumming
Maconochie, A. W.
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
M'Iver, Sir Lewis (*Edinburgh W*
M'Killop, Jas. (*Stirlingshire*)
Majendie, James A. H.
Malcolm, Ian
Manners, Lord Cecil
Maxwell, RtHnSirH. E (*Wigt'n*
Maxwell, WJH (*Dumfriesshire*
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mount, William Arthur
Murray, RtHnA. Graham (*Bute*
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Peel, Hn. Wm. R. Wellesley
Percy, Earl
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Pym, C. Guy
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomson
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford
Seely, Maj. J. E. B (*Isle of Wight*
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (*Renfrew*
Smith, Jas. Parker (*Lanarks.*
Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (*Strand*)
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Jn. M.
Stroyan, John
Sturt, Hn. Humphry Napier
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. E. M.
Valentia, Viscount
Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir W. H.
Welby, Lt-Col A. C. E (*Taunton*
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Wilson, A. S. (*York, E. R.*)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Asher, Alexander
Brigg, John
Brown, Geo. M. (*Edinburgh*)
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Caldwell, James
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H
Causton, Richard Knight
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*
Crombie, John William
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Alfred (*Carmarthen*)
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*
Duncan, J. Hastings
Dunn, Sir William
Elibank, Master of
Evans, Saml. T. (*Glamorgan*)
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (*Leith*
Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
Harmsworth, R. Leicester
Hayne, Rt. Hon Charles Seale-
Jones, Wm. (*Carnarvonshire*)
Kearley, Hudson E.
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leng, Sir John
Levy, Maurice
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah
Morley, Rt. Hn. John (*Montrose*
Reid, Sir R. Threshie (*Dumfries*
Rickett, J. Compton
Rigg, Richard
Roberts, John Bryn (*Eifion*)
Roberts, John H. (*Denbighs.*)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rose, Charles Day
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbt. L. (*Cleveland*)
Shaw, Charles E. (*Stafford*)
Shaw, Thomas (*Hawick, B.*)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Spencer, Rt. Hn. C R (*Northants*
Ure, Alexander
Wallace, Robert
Wason, E. (*Clackmannan*)
Wason, J. Cathcart (*Orkney*)
Weir, James Galloway
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Herbert Gladstone and Mr. William M'Arthur.

Mr. Dalziel.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The House having decided against the proposal we made, I shall advise my friends to vote against the Motion to refer the Bill to the Standing Committee on Trade. I prefer a Committee of the whole House as, judging by our experience to-day, we will have a large number of Scottish Members and very few English Members. That is a state of things in which the Bill can be best discussed.

Original Question put.

House divided:—Ayes, 121; Noes, 52. (Division List No. 59.)

AYES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster Hugh O.
Arrol, Sir William
Atkinson, Rt. Hn. John
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Baird, John George Alexander
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Manch'r*
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (*Leeds*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bartley, Sir George C. T.
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Bhownaggree, Sir M. M.
Bignold, Arthur
Bill, Charles
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Campbell, Rt Hn J A (*Glasg.*)
Cavendish, V. C. W. (*Derbyshire*
Cecil, Evelyn (*Aston Manor*)
Chamberlain, Rt Hon J (*Birm*
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J A (*Worc*
Chaplin, Right Hon. Henry
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Cochrane, Hon. T. H. A. E.
Corbett, A. Cameron (*Glasg.*)
Corbett, T. L. (*Down, North*)
Cox, Irwin Edward Bainbridge
Cranborne, Viscount
Crossley, Sir Savile
Cubitt, Hon. Henry
Dalkeith, Earl of
Davenport, William Bromley
Dickson, Charles Scott
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt. Hn. Sir William Hart
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Fitzroy, Hon. Edw. Algernon
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Galloway, William Johnson
Gardner, Ernest
Godson, Sir Augustus Frederick
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (*Elgin & Nrn*
Gore, Hn. S. F. Ormsby- (*Linc*
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Eldon
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Greene, Hy. D. (*Shrewsbury*)
Gretton, John
Hall, Edward Marshall
Hamilton, Rt Hn Ld. G. (*Midx*
Hanbury, Rt. Hn. Robt. Wm.
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Heath, James (*Staffs., N. W.*)
Henderson, Sir Alexander
Hope, J. F. (*Sheffield, Brightside*
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop.*
Keswick, William
Lambton, Hon. Fredk. Wm.
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*).
Lawson, John Grant
Lee, A. H. (*Hants, Fareham*)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Fredk. N. S.
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Chas. W. (*Evesham*
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (*Bristol, S*)
Lowe, Francis William
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*)
Lucas, Reginald J (*Portsmouth*)
Macdona, John Cumming
Maconochie, A. W.
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
M'Iver, Sir Lewis (*Edinburgh W*
M'Killop, Jas. (*Stirlingshire*)
Majendie, James A. H.
Malcolm, Ian
Manners, Lord Cecil
Maxwell, Rt Hn Sir H. E (*Wigt'n*
Maxwell, W. J H (*Dumfriesshire*
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mount, William Arthur
Murray, Rt. Hn A. Graham (*Bute*
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Peel, Hn. Wm. R. Wellesley
Percy, Earl
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Pretyman, Ernest George
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Pym, C. Guy
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. C. Thomson
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford
Seely, Maj. J. E. B. (*Isle of Wight*
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (*Renfrew*)
Smith, Jas. Parker (*Lanarks.*)
Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (*Strand*)
Stanley, Lord (*Lancs.*)
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Jn. M.
Stroyan, John
Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomlinson, Sir Wm. E. M.
Valentia, Viscount
Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir W. H.
Welby, Lt-Col A. C. E. (*Taunton*
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Wilson, A. Stanley (*York E. R.*)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Asher, Alexander
Brigg, John
Brown, Geo. M. (*Edinburgh*)
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Caldwell, James
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H
Causton, Richard Knight
Craig, Robert Hunter (*Lanark*)
Crombie, John William
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Alfred (*Carmarthen*)
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Duncan, J. Hastings
Dunn, Sir William
Elibank, Master of
Evans, Saml. T. (*Glamorgan*)
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (*Leith*
Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
Harmsworth, R. Leicester
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-
Jones, William (*Carnarvonshire*
Kearley, Hudson E.
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leng, Sir John
Levy, Maurice
Lough, Thomas
Lundon, W.
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah
Morley, Rt. Hn. John (*Montrose*
Reid, Sir R. Threshie (*Dumfries*)
Rickett, J. Compton
Rigg, Richard
Roberts, John Bryn (*Eifion*)
Roberts, John H. (*Denbighs.*)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rose, Charles Day
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.

Samuel, Herbt. L. (*Cleveland*)
Shaw, Charles E. (*Stafford*)
Shaw, Thomas (*Hawick, B.*)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Spencer,Rt.HnC.R.(*Northants*
Ure, Alexander
Wallace, Robert
Wason, E. (*Clackmannan*)
Wason. John Cathcart(*Orkney*
Weir, James Galloway
White, Luke (*York, E. R.*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Herbert Gladstone and Mr. William M'Arthur.

Bill committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc.

LICENSING ACTS CONSOLIDATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order for Second Reading read.

*MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY, in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, said he thought hon. Members were aware what it was. The Memorandum prefixed to the Bill told everything about it that was necessary to be known. There had been a united demand from everybody interested in the subject for a Bill to consolidate all the various statutes on the subject of licensing. There was absolutely no change made in the law at all. He had no doubt the House would pass the Second Reading of the Bill. It would, of course, be sent to the Standing Committee on Trade with the other Bill, and in the course of time he would move an instruction which would allow the two Bills to be welded into one measure. If that course commended itself to hon. Members the two Bills would come back to the House to be finally passed into law as one Bill.

SIR ROBERT REID agreed with the proposal to read the Bill a second time. The Lord Advocate had divulged a fact which they should have liked to know during the previous discussion—namely, that it was intended to send this Bill with the Bill which preceded it to the Standing Committee on Trade, and that an Instruction would be moved to put them into one Bill. It came to this—that the whole of the licensing laws of Scotland were to be considered by a Committee which was open to the objections stated in the discussion of the previous Bill.

*MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY said the hon. and learned Member opposite misunderstood him. He only took the House into his confidence when he stated that he would move an Instruction. There was no proposal in the Consolidation Bill for the Committee to consider at all. It would be absolutely impossible for the Committee to deal with it if they were going to open up the whole of the licensing law embraced in the Consolidation Bill. He did not propose that anything in the Consolidation Bill, except pointing out of errors in drafting, should be gone into by the Committee. When the Committee was finished with the Bill he thought it would be convenient, as was done in the case of factory legislation, that the one Bill should be grafted on the other. In that matter he should be entirely in the hands of the Committee.

SIR ROBERT REID remarked that he had not a word to say against the proposal to unite the two Bills, but he wished to point out that they were going to send the Consolidated Bill to a Committee which was open to the same objections as were stated in the case of the last proposal. The consideration of the Consolidation Bill required a great deal of technical knowledge and familiarity with the subject of licensing to do the work properly. He thought the Lord Advocate would not dispute the proposition that the consolidation of the Scotch licensing laws was rather a serious, heavy, and difficult operation, and it was quite a mistake to suppose that the passing of the Bill was necessarily a matter of form. He did not charge the Lord Advocate with having withheld information from the House, but he thought it was a great pity that the right hon. Gentleman did not tell them when they were discussing the last Bill that the Consolidation Bill was to be sent to a Committee from which two-thirds of the Scotch Members were excluded.

MR. BUCHANAN said the proposal of the Lord Advocate appeared to be open to an objection besides that stated by his hon. and learned friend. It was proposed to send the Bill to the Grand Committee on Trade, and the Lord Advocate had stated that he was going to move an Instruction that this Bill and the previous Bill should be amalgamated. In that case, when the Bill came back to the House to be considered on Report, it would not be a Consolidation Bill pure and simple, and the House would have the right to go into every detail of it. Surely that was an awkward way of proceeding in regard to a Consolidation Bill. He thought it would be better that that action should be delayed in regard to the Consolidation Bill until the other Bill had passed through the Report Stage. If it was desirable to do so the Lord Advocate could then move that the two Bills be amalgamated. It was unusual to send a Consolidation Bill, which was a purely legal Bill, to the Grand Committee on Trade instead of the Grand Committee on Law.

Bill read a second time.

*THE LORD ADVOCATE moved that the Bill be referred to the Grand Committee on Trade. He was not pledging the House to any course of procedure, but the hon. Member was quite wrong in supposing that what was proposed could not be done. If the hon. Members could not see their way to doing it in that manner, the only thing would be to pass the Bills separately.

MR. THOMAS SHAW said he had no desire to interpose any objection to the progress of this Bill, but he would point out to the House the difficulty they were in. The Bill before the House was one to consolidate the existing Acts of Parliament, and what was proposed was to superinduce on it the Bill which they discussed this afternoon. They would then have in the Consolidation Act, a fresh Act which had not yet come into existence. It was quite clear from its composition that the Grand Committee on Trade would not be representative of Scotch opinion, and therefore when the Bill came from the Grand Committee, it would have to run the gauntlet of this House, and probably be to some extent transmuted. If the Lord Advocate, or any member of the Government, would hold out any prospect that the Consolidation Bill would be held back until the earlier Bill had been passed, he could see some light in the situation, but at present he thought the process would be complicated for the Grand Committee, and certainly most embarrassing for all the Members of the House.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said the Committee must take the Consolidation Bill as a matter of course on the authority of the Home Office. That was perhaps the best course that could be adopted.

MR. PARKER SMITH (Lanark, Partick) said that in considering the first Bill it would be convenient for hon. Members to have the Consolidation Bill near their hands. He asked the Lord Advocate whether there would be any guarantee that the Consolidation Bill truly represented the law it amalgamated, or whether they would be obliged to take that on the authority of the Scotch Office and the right hon. Gentleman himself.

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) said the Lord Advocate had omitted to notice the great distinction between this Bill and the Factory Bill. In the case of the Factory Bill there was a considerable amount of agreement, but in the case of the Consolidation Bill there was considerable prejudice against the Bill going to the Grand Committee. When it came back to the House, hon. Members would be entitled to propose Amendments to any part of it. If the Government were going to fight with the Scotch Members, he did not see what they would gain by sending the Bill to the Grand Committee on Trade. He would be in the House on the Report Stage to move any Amendment he liked. He for one would not put himself about in order to be on the Grand Committee on Trade, but he could promise that when the Bill came back to the House he would give it the ordinary consideration he gave to all Bills.

SIR R. REID said that personally he did not see any objection to sending the Bill to the Grand Committee on Trade. The other proposition was to move an Instruction that there should be an amalgamation of the Bills. He suggested that the Lord Advocate should postpone that to a later stage.

*MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: I would not propose to move it, in, any case, until the first Bill is through Committee.

Bill committed to the Standing Committee on Trade, etc.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

[THIRD READING.]

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

MAJOR SEELY (Ise of Wight) reminded the House that in the Committee stage a definite agreement was come to between the Financial Secretary to the War Office and the House as to what were to be put in the recruiting regulations in the future with regard to the age of recruits at the time of enlistment, in accordance with the Resolution of the House. That Resolution quite revolutionised the position of the Regular Army with reference to recruiting. The Secretary of State for War stated that the regulations would be issued as soon as possible, but he had given no indication of what the regulations would be. In view of the revolutionary change, he asked if they were to be put off from day to day as to what the regulations would be and as to the date when they would be issued. He appealed to the Secretary of State for War, in order to prevent misunderstanding, to state what the regulations were to be and when he proposed to issue them.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford) thought the hon. Member, who had not been long a Member of the House, was hardly justified in assuming that, after a Resolution had been passed by the House, within two or three days the Minister was bound to lay the regulations, in accordance with the Resolution on the Table. The House was always willing to give credit to the Minister in charge that he would honourably fulfil any pledges he might have given, and the hon. Member's insistence hardly showed that confidence which was usually shown to a Minister in such circumstances. He was not prepared to state the date when the Resolution would be put into the exact form the hon. and gallant Member desired. But he must tell the hon. and gallant Member that he was quite in error in supposing that the proposals were revolutionary. There was nothing revolutionary about them at all. The words to carry out the Resolution of the House would be put in the new regulations which would, he presumed, be issued in the ordinary course. They were generally issued at the beginning of a month, but he thought it might be possible in this case to accelerate the issue of them by a few days if great importance was attached to the matter.

MR. CALDWELL said he did not suppose the Secretary of State for War would apply to him the remark that he was a new Member of the House. He maintained that the hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Wight had done the proper thing in pressing for an answer on this subject. His experience of the House was that they must go on pegging away when they desired to have a matter attended to.

SIR JOHN GORST (Cambridge University) said it was only a week or ten days ago that attention was called to a Resolution passed ten years ago in regard to the wages of workmen in the Arsenal, which confessedly the War Office had paid no attention to.

MAJOR JAMESON (Clare, W.) suggested to the Secretary of State for War that he would find in the Royal Irish Constabulary a body of men who would make a fine division for the Army. Some hon. Members seemed to imagine that Army reforms could be carried out in five minutes. He knew as an old soldier that they could not. He sympathised with the right hon. Gentleman in the difficult task he had set before him.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

EVICTED TENANTS (IRELAND).

Return ordered, "Showing the number of tenants evicted in Ireland within the past twenty-five years who have not been re-instated in their holdings, as follows: number under £10 yearly rent; number over £10 and under £20; number over £20 and under £50; number over £50 and under £100; number over £100 and under £200; number over £200."—(*Mr. Cullinan.*)

Adjourned at thirteen minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 7th April, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

North Middlesex Gas Bill, read the third time, and passed.

Sutton District Water Bill, as amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill, read the third time, and passed.

Castleblaney, Keady, and Armagh Railway (Extension of Time) Bill, petition for additional provision; referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

CLUBS REGISTRATION (SCOTLAND).

Petition from Aberdeen, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Wisbech; and Halifax (two) to lie upon the Table.

DESTITUTE ADULT BLIND.

Petition from Falkirk, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Ballantrae; and Colmonell; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION IN THE METROPOLIS.

Petitions for legislation: from London (four); and Oxshott and other places; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petitions for alteration: from Newburgh; Kinghorn; Dysart; and Aberdeen; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC HOUSES (HOURS OF CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Glasgow, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

Petition from Gloucester, against; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.

Petitions against: from Colchester; Gloucester; Salisbury; and Swansea; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1884.

Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 27th March, 1903, declaring that Mrs. Charlotte Ann Reynolds, Postmistress, Daventry Post Office, was appointed without a Civil Service Certificate through inadvertence on the part of the Head of her Department [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1887.

Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 28th March, 1903, granting a retired allowance to George F. Laidlaw, Rural Postman, Christchurch Post Office, under the Act [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

MILITARY EXPENDITURE.

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 12th March; *Mr. Charles Hobhouse*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 108.]

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND) (SALMON FISHERIES).

Copy presented, of a Bacteriological Investigation into the cause of Salmon Disease, by Mr. J. Hume Patterson, of the Bacteriological Laboratory of the City of Glasgow [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

DISEASES OF ANIMALS ACTS, 1894 AND 1896.

Copies presented, of two Orders, numbered 6641 and 6648, respectively, relating to the landing of Foreign Animals in Great Britain [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

COTTON FACTORIES.

Address for "Return of the number of Cotton Factories subject to inspection under The Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, and the number of spindles and looms used in such factories."—(*Sir William Holland.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Election of Citizens' Auditor at Leicester.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the election of the citizens' auditor in Leicester on 4th March; and whether, seeing that the number of electors entitled to vote is 44,000, and that only one polling clerk was provided, and that persons who came to record their votes after six o'clock were in consequence prevented from so doing, he will state whether he proposes to take any, and, if so, what, steps to prevent the disfranchisement of electors at such elections in future.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) I have received a communication from the town clerk on the subject. He informs me that the election of two elective auditors for the borough took place on 2nd March; that the number of burgesses entitled to vote was 40,684, and of these 2,148 voted at the election, a much higher proportion than in certain other large towns; and that 420 persons recorded their votes after six o'clock in the evening. Nine persons are stated to have assisted in taking the votes. I have no jurisdiction, however, with regard to the election of borough auditors, and I am not empowered to take any action in the matter.

Taunton Isolation Hospital—Refusal to Grant an Inquiry.

COLONEL WELBY (Taunton): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he will explain why an inquiry into the management of the Taunton Isolation Hospital asked for by the Taunton Town Council and the Taunton Rural District Council, who are jointly responsible for it, has been refused; and whether he will reconsider his decision in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) I understand that an agreement was made in 1895 between the Town Council and the Rural District Council under which the hospital referred to was to be managed by the Town Council for five years and by the Rural District Council for the next three years. The authority not in management were empowered to appoint a consultative committee to meet the committee of management, and a visiting committee consisting of one member from each authority was to be appointed. The three years of control by the Rural District Council commenced in 1901. Some complaints were recently made as regards the management of the hospital. The matter was inquired into by a committee consisting of members of both authorities, with the Town Clerk, who are stated to have expressed themselves satisfied that there was no ground for complaint. The Town Council asked the Local Government Board to hold an inquiry on the subject; but the Rural District Council, after receiving a report from their committee of management, informed the Board that they did not join in the application, as they considered an inquiry quite unnecessary. They stated that they were quite satisfied that, with some further directions they had given, every care and attention would be bestowed on the patients. I have no control over the administration of this institution, which rests entirely with the local bodies; and in the circumstances of the case I could not undertake to direct an inquiry into the matter. I may point out that the period of management by the Rural District Council expires this year, when an opportunity will be given to the two authorities to make any fresh arrangements they may desire.

Tonnage of Fishing Vessels—Cost of Government Inspection.

CAPTAIN SINCLAIR (Forfarshire): To ask the President of the Board of Trade, in view of the operation in Scotland, especially in remote districts, of the rules now in force for ascertaining the tonnage of fishing boats, under which owners of such boats must, if they desire to have the tonnage correctly ascertained, apply to a Board of Trade surveyor, whose fee and travelling expenses, unavoidably great in amount in the case of visits to distant parts of the coast of Scotland, fall to be borne by the fishermen, whether he will consider the advisability of increasing the number of Government officers authorised to discharge this duty either by adding to the number of Board of Trade surveyors, of whom there are only a small number, and these in the populous parts of Scotland, or by endeavouring to obtain the co-operation of the officers of the Fishery Board for Scotland, or by any such other provision as may seem to him fit.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) Under the present regulations the tonnage of fishing vessels can be measured by Customs, Coast Guard, or Fishery Board officers, but if the owner of the vessel wishes the crew space to be deducted from the tonnage, the Sixth Schedule to The Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, requires such space to be first surveyed and certified by a Board of Trade surveyor. The Board are not at present prepared to promise an increase in the number of their surveyors in Scotland; but every care shall be taken to prevent avoidable expense. I may add that the whole matter is receiving my careful consideration.

Southampton Harbour—Speed Limit.

SIR ROBERT FITZGERALD (Cambridge): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to a bylaw proposed by the Southampton Harbour Board under which all vessels propelled by steam, etc., will, irrespective of size, be prevented from steaming at a speed exceeding six knots an hour above Hythe Pier; and to its effect on the passenger steamers from the Isle of Wight (which carry His Majesty's mails), and, if so, will he state what operation it will have on His Majesty's ships; whether there is any precedent for such a bylaw; and whether he will make representation to the Harbour Board with a view to the limit of speed being increased to twelve knots and the operation of the by-law limited to vessels exceeding a certain tonnage.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) I havemade some inquiries into this matter, and find that the Board of Trade have no jurisdiction. I shall, however, be happy to direct the attention of the Harbour Board to my hon. friend's Question. It is, of course, for the Admiralty authorities to deal with any matter affecting His Majesty's ships.

Sugar Imports.

SIR JAMES WOODHOUSE (Huddersfield): To ask the President to the Board of Trade if he will state the total import of sugar in 1902, and when the Sugar Convention will again be brought under the consideration of the House.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) The total quantity of refined sugar imported into the United Kingdom in 1902 was 919,491 tons, and of unrefined sugar 658,909 tons. I am unable to answer the last part of the Question; perhaps the hon. Member will address a Question on the subject to the Prime Minister.

Holyhead Harbour—Removal of Rocks.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH (Anglesey): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the obstructions at the entrance to the harbour of refuge at Holyhead and the consequent danger to ships seeking shelter therein, and the casualties that have ensued in consequence, the Board of Trade will be prepared to complete the harbour by removing the Platters' Rocks.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) This matter stands as it did when my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, then President of the Board of Trade, made an exhaustive statement on the subject in the House on 18th April, 1898.

I am not aware of any casualties which can be ascribed to the Platters' Rocks.

Board of Trade Concessions to North Western Railway Company.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the negotiations between the Board of Trade and the London and North Western Railway Company as to the concession by the Board of certain rights and privileges to the Company for the purposes of the Company's cross-channel service at Holyhead have been concluded; and whether the present state of the negotiations may be published.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) No negotiations with the London and North Western Railway Company are now in progress. I informed the hon. Member on 21st February 1901, by answer to a Question in this House that they had been abandoned.†

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† See (4) *Debates*, lxxxix. 686.

Holyhead Landing Stage—Lack of Accommodation.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the state of the wooden jetty used for the landing of the Irish mails at Holyhead; whether the Government intend to carry out the project contemplated some time ago of replacing the jetty by a permanent stone pier; and whether, in view of the lack of landing accommodation for passengers and goods from other steamers at Holyhead, the Government will take steps to extend the Mackenzie Pier, or deepen the approaches to the Pelham Quay and erect a suitable landing-place thereat.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) With regard to the wooden mail jetty, Sir John Wolfe Barry reported on the 19th June last that the jetty was in good condition, but he suggested the deposit of concrete to protect certain portions of it. The necessary work has been carried out with satisfactory results. The project for erecting a new stone pier has been postponed for the present. As regards the extension of the Mackenzie Pier, the Board of Trade have at present no funds which they could devote to this purpose.

Development of Holyhead Bay.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has received a communication from the Holyhead Urban District Council requesting a concession to the Council of such part of the Holyhead Bay as might, without affecting the utility of the Harbour of Refuge, be required for the purposes of constructing a deep-water dock, and otherwise developing the resources of the bay; and, if so, whether such a concession will be granted to the Council.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) The Board of Trade received a communication from the Council couched in very general terms, and in reply intimated that details must be supplied before an opinion on the subject could be given.

High-Water Line at Inch Strand.

MR THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that Mr. Woodhouse visited Inch Strand on 23rd February, 1903, exactly eight tides before ordinary spring tide, and that on that day there was a northerly wind which would also affect the tide; and whether, in view of the number of farmers who depend for the manuring of their crops on the seaweeds thrown on the foreshore, and in view of the litigation on the subject, he will order a public inquiry to decide what is the high-water line.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) I have no information that a Mr. Woodhouse visited Inch Strand on 23rd February, or any other date. Lieutenant Penfold, of H.M.S. "Collingwood," at the request of the Board of Trade, visited Inch Strand on that date. On that occasion, I am informed there was a strong westerly gale blowing which raised the waters of the bay above the ordinary level. The state of the tide at the time was four days after neaps, and therefore approximately the period of ordinary tides. I think if the hon. Member will inspect the map referred to in the reply given on 26th March, he will be satisfied that the present line of high-water ordinary tides is made sufficiently clear.†

Allowances to the Crews of the "Princess Alexandra" and "Tearaght."

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if, whilst the crew were retained by the "Princess Alexandra" at Liverpool, they received any allowance in addition to their wages; can he state on what work the cook and stewards of the "Tearaght" are at present engaged; and what allowance in addition to their wages the officers and crew of that vessel are receiving; and will he explain why a temporary second officer has been engaged.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) These are matters entirely within the control of the Irish Lights Board, with whom I will communicate.

Valentia Harbour Beacons.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been called to the fact that the beacons erected to guide ships into Valentia Harbour are not correctly charted; and, if so, will he instruct the Irish Lights Board to have their position on the chart rectified.

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† See page 313.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) This is a matter for the consideration of the Irish Lights Board, with whom I will communicate.

Pay of Joiners in Dockyards.

MR. KEARLEY (Devonport): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether any decision has been arrived at with regard to the pay of the joiners in His Majesty's Dockyard.

(*Answered by Mr. Arnold-Forster.*) The decision of the Admiralty with respect to this question, and with respect to other matters which were brought under the notice of the Board on the occasion of their recent visits to the various yards, will be announced shortly.

Coal Duty—Rebate on "Sokoto's" Cargo.

MR. ALBAN GIBBS (London): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to the fact that a cargo of coal was shipped, duty paid, for Chili on the 18th February per "Sokoto," but that, owing to stress of weather, the ship had to put back to Swansea, and 1,500 tons were discharged and sold there as damaged, by the advice of the surveyors; and whether, under the circumstances, he will allow a rebate of duty on this coal, or allow the fresh lot that is to be shipped on the vessel to replace it to go free of duty.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) The facts as to the shipment of a duty-paid cargo of coal on board the "Sokoto," the return of the vessel in a damaged state after having been at sea some time, and the landing of a part of the cargo of coal, are as indicated in the hon. Member's Question. Application was made to the Board of Customs for return of the duty on the coal so landed which, it is stated, was unfit for reshipment, or, in the alternative, for exemption from duty of the coal to be shipped in its place. The Board are advised that they have no power under the law to afford the relief asked for. It is open to shippers of coal to protect themselves against losses of the kind by insuring against the risk.

Public Elementary Education in Ireland—Proportion of Cost borne by Imperial Exchequer.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY (Somersetshire, S.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of the total cost of public elementary education in Ireland is borne by the Imperial Exchequer; whether this proportion is greater than in the case of England and Wales; and, if so, whether he proposes to make any equivalent grant to England and Wales.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) There is no education rate in Ireland, and nearly the whole cost of public elementary education is borne on the Votes. It must not, however, be assumed that the grants for elementary education in Ireland, as compared with population, are appreciably (if at all) higher than in England, though the systems are so different that comparison is not easy. The answer to the last clause of the Question is in the negative.

Irish Police Force—Proportion of Cost borne by the Imperial Exchequer.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of the total cost of the police force in Ireland is borne by the Imperial Exchequer; whether this proportion is greater than in the case of England and Wales; and, if so, whether he proposes to make any equivalent grant to England and Wales.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) Nearly the whole cost of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and more than half of the cost of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, is borne upon the Votes. As regards the police in England and Wales, no part of the cost falls upon the Exchequer, but one-half of the cost of pay and clothing in the extra-metropolitan districts, and a similar proportion in the metropolitan district, is charged upon the funds assigned to the local authorities from the local taxation account. A contribution is also made from the local taxation account in respect of police superannuation. The answer to the last clause is in the negative.

Irish Contribution to the Imperial Exchequer.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of the Imperial Expenditure of the United Kingdom is contributed by Ireland; and whether this proportion is greater or less than the relative taxable capacity of Ireland as determined by the Royal Commission on Financial Relations.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) In the financial year 1901–2 (the last for which figures are available) the contribution from Irish Revenue towards Imperial Expenditure was 2·54 per cent. of the total amount so contributed by the United Kingdom. In other words, Ireland's contribution was about one thirty-eighth of that of Great Britain The Financial Relations Commission estimated Ireland's taxable capacity as not exceeding one-twentieth of that of Great Britain.

Importation of Milk.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will give the names of the ports of embarkation and debarkation of fresh milk, and of preserved milk other than condensed, imported into the United Kingdom during the year 1902, together with the names and addresses of the persons to whom such milk was consigned; also whether he will give the amount of fat and non-fatty solids in the samples of such imported milk analysed in 1902, and the dates on which such samples were taken.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) I do not think it would be desirable to give the names and addresses of the persons referred to, but the names of the ports of debarkation and embarkation are as follows:—

Fresh milk imported in 1902—

Ports of Debarkation.	Ports of Embarkation.
London	Rotterdam
Harwich	,,
Hull	Amsterdam
Southampton	Cherbourg
	Havre
	Honfleur

Preserved milk (other than condensed) imported in 1902—

Ports of Debarkation.	Ports of Embarkation.
London	Riga
,,	Drammen
,,	Harlingen
,,	Rotterdam
,,	Amsterdam
,,	Ostend
,,	Boulogne
,,	Genoa
,,	Sydney
,,	Brisbane
,,	New York
Liverpool	,,
,,	Boston
Folkestone	Boulogne
Grimsby	Hamburg
,,	Antwerp
Harwich	Rotterdam
,,	Antwerp
Hull	Christiania
,,	Amsterdam
Newcastle	Copenhagen
,,	Stavanger
Newhaven	Dieppe
Southampton	Amsterdam
,,	New York
,,	Havre
,,	Honfleur
Glasgow	Antwerp
Grangemouth	Amsterdam
Leith	Rotterdam
,,	Amsterdam

The results of analyses of samples of fresh milk and preserved milk (other than condensed) taken by the Customs during 1902 were as follows—

Date of Sampling.	Description of milk.	Results of Analysis.	
		Percentage of Fat.	Percentage of Non-Fatty Solids.
10th February - - - -	Separated	·20	9·06
26th February - - - -	Sterilised	2·91	8·47
7th March - - - -	,,	1·89	9·07
10th March - - -	Separated	·20	9·12
26th May - - -	Sterilised	3·00	8·85
24th June - - -	Fresh	2·83	8·80
25th June - - - -	Sterilised	2·60	9·34
15th September - -	Fresh	3·12	9·65
20th November - - -	,,	4·60	9·28
16th December - - -	,,	4·00	9·28

In addition, a sample of frozen milk was taken on 13th January, but as it was found not to have been properly drawn, the analysis was not completed. The samples taken on the 26th February and 24th June, although deficient in fat, were not so reported to the Customs Department, the condition of the samples when received being such as to raise a doubt whether they truly represented the bulk as imported. The samples taken on the 7th March and 25th June were the subject of proceedings against the importers, as stated by me in answer to the hon. Member's previous Question on the 10th of March last.†

Coronation Medal—Name of Designer.

Mr. PIERPOINT (Warrington): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state who was the designer of the medals in commemoration of His Majesty's Coronation which are being issued to the public on payment; and by whom and where the dies were engraved.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) The medals issued to the public on payment were designed by Mr. G. W. De Saulles, Engraver of the Mint, who also engraved the dies in the Mint.

Appointment of a Rural Postman at Millstreet, Cork — Application of Denis Murphy.

Mr. SHEEHAN (Cork Co., Mid.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been directed to an application from Denis Murphy, at present acting as auxiliary postman, for appointment to the vacant position of rural postman from Millstreet to Cullen, County Cork; and whether, in view of this man's character and qualifications, he will consider the advisability of appointing him to this vacancy.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) Yes, Sir; but the vacancy is one which under existing regulations will be given to an ex-soldier, and I cannot therefore appoint Denis Murphy.

Concession to Auxiliary Postmen doing less than five hours daily.

Mr. JAMES O'CONNOR: To ask the Postmaster-General if he will explain why the privileges granted at the Norfolk-Hanbury interview in 1897 to auxiliaries doing rather less than five hours' work, but receiving the pay of men actually performing five hours a day, are only granted to London men, seeing that no distinction is made in the recommendation between London and the provinces.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) The case put before the Duke of Norfolk and Mr. Hanbury in 1897 was that of certain men employed in London, and the concession made applied only to those men. The concession was not to apply to future entrants, nor to auxiliaries outside London.

Women Telegraphists at Brighton.

Mr. JAMES O'CONNOR: To ask the Postmaster-General whether he has received a petition from the women telegraphists at Brighton with reference to promotions; and whether, seeing that women telegraphists at that town have been engaged at St. James Street branch office and similar offices, he will explain why the promotion has been given to a clerk from Beckenham, passing over the women telegraphists at Brighton, in view of the fact that no complaint has been made of the manner in which they performed their duties.

(*Answered by Mr. Austen Chamberlain.*) The petition from the women telegraphists at Brighton was duly considered by me before the promotion in question was made, but I was unable to meet their wishes. The officer promoted had special qualifications for the vacant post, and her transfer to Brighton was made in the public interest.

Sale of the Fishery Board Cruiser "Garland."

Mr. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the Lord Advocate whether the Secretary for Scotland is aware that the sum of £550, derived from the sale of the Fishery Board cruiser "Garland," has not been brought to account as an Appropriation in Aid in the Fishery

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxix., 256.

Board Estimates; and will he state in what way it is proposed to account for the money.

(*Answered by Mr. A. Graham Murray.*) Under Treasury instructions, the net proceeds of the sale of the "Garland" were paid into Exchequer and will be shown as Exchequer extra receipts in the Appropriation Account for the financial year 1902–3.

Polling Stations at Walkerburn, Peebles-shire.

THE MASTER OF ELIBANK (Edinburgh, Midlothian): To ask the Lord Advocate whether, in view of the inconvenience caused to the inhabitants of Walkerburn, in the county of Peebles-shire, owing to the lack of adequate polling facilities in the district on the occasion of Parliamentary and other elections, and the consequent necessity of a four-mile walk for the purpose of recording votes, he will take steps to remove this ground of complaint in the future.

(*Answered by Mr. A. Graham Murray.*) I have no knowledge of the facts in question, though I must be allowed to deprecate the idea that four miles is an excessive distance in a county district. The question of polling stations, however, is one for the determination of the sheriff, subject to the sanction of the Lord Advocate. The proper procedure is the presentation of a petition by an adequate number of voters to the sheriff, upon which inquiry follows.

Pacific Cable—Loss to Indian Government.

MR. RUNCIMAN (Dewsbury): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether the opening of a subsidised cable service across the Pacific has resulted in a loss of Revenue to the Indian Government by the falling off of transit traffic across India, and, if so, whether His Majesty's Government or the Colonial Governments concerned, propose to pay any compensation to the Indian Government.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) Some loss has no doubt occurred owing to the Pacific cable having been opened for traffic, but there does not appear to be any ground for claiming compensation.

Draft Treaties of Marine Law.

MR. RUNCIMAN: To ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs when the draft treaties relating to the law of collision and salvage at sea were received from the Belgian Government; whether any reply has been made to the Belgian Government; and if he can yet state what action is to be taken by the Government.

(*Answered by Lord Cranborne.*) The draft treaties relating to the law of collision and salvage at sea were received from the Belgian Government on 3rd January. A reply has been returned to the Belgian Government, but the matter is still under consideration.

Local Education Authorities—Rates.

MR. RENWICK (Newcastle-on-Tyne): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether the council of a borough, under section 18 of The Education Act, 1902, can levy a rate for the expenses of elementary education before the day appointed by the Board of Education under the provisions of Section 27 of the Act as the appointed day for the coming into operation in such borough of Part III. and of the other provisions of the Education Act relating to elementary education.

(*Answered by Mr. Walter Long.*) My hon. friend has asked me to reply to this Question. As I am advised, the answer is in the affirmative.

Evictions from Labourers' Cottages.

MR. TULLY (Leitrim, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the fact that a labourer's cottage was erected under the Labourers Acts in the division of Lower Kilmore, in the Longford Union, on a representation sent in by Robert Wilders, he will state the loss to the rates and the legal expenses incurred by the Longford District Council in evicting this man from this cottage, and if the auditor has surcharged any of these losses; and whether he will consider the advisability of introducing in the Irish Land Bill an amendment to prevent rural district councils evicting labourers living in cottages erected at the expense of the ratepayers in similar circumstances.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) Wilders does not appear to have been in occupation of the cottage. It was built in pursuance of a representation lodged on his behalf, but the council, instead of letting the cottage to Wilders, gave it to a man named Nertney. The latter gave up possession in January last, having paid no rent, and the cottage has since been let to Dominick Reilly. The arrears of rent due by Nertney amount to £3 2s. 8d., and the attention of the auditor has been drawn to the entire matter.

Release of Patrick Hughes.

MR. TULLY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been directed to a memorial from the Longford Board of Guardians praying for the release of Patrick Hughes, of Ardnacassa; and, if so, will he state whether he can accede to it.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The memorial in question has not been received. The man was discharged from custody early last month on the expiration of his term of imprisonment.

Ireland Development Grant Bill—Date of Second Reading.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is proposed to take the Second Reading of the Ireland Development Grant Bill on the 22nd April; or, if not, on what day will it be taken.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) I am not at present in a position to assign a date for the Second Reading of this Bill.

Exchequer Contribution to Ireland

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, what is the actual total amount of the Exchequer contributions to Ireland during the years 1901–2 and 1902–3 respectively; is it proposed to make in future any further Exchequer contributions to Ireland in addition to those made in 1902–3; and, if so, what is the total amount of such further contributions, of what items are they composed, how is it proposed to authorise them, and to what special purposes will they be appropriated; and will he lay on the Table of the House a statement showing how the sum of £2,548,460 which His Majesty's Government estimate will, if their proposals are adopted, represent the annual contributions of the Exchequer to Ireland is arrived at, the items whereof it is composed, and the purposes to which those items are to be allocated.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The first part of the Question presumably refers to Exchequer contributions in relief of local taxation. A Return will be laid upon the Table, which will set forth the desired information.

South African War—Compensation to Loyalists.

MR. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby): To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will state whether in South Africa the property of loyal persons injured or destroyed by the operations of His Majesty's or the Boer forces is a subject for compensation; and, if so, by what authority, whether Imperial or local; and whether after inquiry by some Commission or what ascertainment of circumstances of the alleged loss.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain.*) Compensation is, in these cases, an act of grace and not of legal right, but it has been granted wherever necessary to assist individual loyalists to resume their occupations. His Majesty's Government undertook that the amount of compensation assessed by duly appointed commissions as due to loyal persons in the Cape and Natal should be paid and included in the amount of the Transvaal loan. £2,000,000 has been provided as a free grant for loyalists in the new colonies whose claims are being investigated by the resident magistrates, and in the particular case of Johannesburg by the Refugees' Aid Department.

New Anglo-Canadian Express Service—British Terminal Port.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any decision has been arrived at as to the British terminal port for the proposed new express service between England and Canada; whether the advantages of Holyhead for this purpose have been considered; and whether he would be prepared to urge these advantages upon the Canadian Government.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain.*) No decision as to the British terminal port has been arrived at. I shall be prepared to communicate to the Dominion Government any representations that may be made as to the advantages of Holyhead.

Railways in Persia.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: To ask the First Lord of the Treasury what communications have passed between His Majesty's Government and Foreign Governments relating to the German Anatolian or Baghdad Railway or to its extension to Koweit on the Persian Gulf; with what Governments have such communications passed, and what is their effect, and has been their result; have His Majesty's Government been approached with any proposal for giving encouragement to the building of that railway either by guaranteeing to it a postal subsidy or in any other manner; if so, what policy do they propose to pursue in the matter; and will he lay on the Table any correspondence that has taken place.

(*Answered by Mr. A. J. Balfour.*) There have been no formal communications between His Majesty's Government and any Foreign Government on the subject of the Baghdad Railway. The proposed railway is not, as suggested in the Question, to be a German-railway. The subject was referred to in two brief conversations, one with the French and one with the German Ambassador, about thirteen months ago. Lord Lansdowne then stated that we should not regard the undertaking with unfriendly eyes provided that British capital and British interests were placed at least on terms of equality with those of any other Power. I am not aware that these conversations have (in the language of the Question) had any "results," or have exercised any influence on subsequent events. Communications have been and are still going on with British capitalists on the subject. No final arrangements have been arrived at. The proposals under consideration involve no guarantee of a postal or any other subsidy. The suggestions to be made to us, are, we understand (1) that British capital and British control are to be on an absolute equality with the capital and control of any other Power; (2) that, in respect to the negotiations which are now going on with the Turkish Government for a new Commercial Treaty (and which, quite apart from the Baghdad Railway, raise the question of increasing the Turkish Customs), His Majesty's Government should not object to a reasonable increase in these duties, although a part of the increase is to be used in guaranteeing a railway so important for the commercial interests of Turkey; (3) that, if the railway should prove to be a substantially better route for conveying the mails to India, it may be used for conveying those mails, on terms to be agreed upon hereafter; (4) that His Majesty's Government should assist, not by money or the promise of money, but by their good offices in providing a proper terminus at or near Koweit. These suggestions will be carefully considered.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Military Canteen Charges.

GENERAL LAURIE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware of the difference in the prices charged in the military canteens in Cape Colony and the Transvaal; and whether any allowance is made to the soldiers to meet the outlay involved by these prices; and, if so, whether it is graduated according to the increased price caused by Customs duty.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Lord STANLEY, Lancashire, Westhoughton): I am aware of the difficulties mentioned. At present Cape Colony allows 25s. and Natal 35s. per soldier per annum as a rebate of Customs duties. The question of revising these rates is at present engaging the attention of both military and colonial authorities.

Compulsory Retirement in the Navy.

SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he will grant the Return relative to Royal Navy (retired officers) standing on the Notice Paper this day.†

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER, Belfast, W.): The Return can be granted, but subject to some modifications which I will explain personally to my hon. and gallant friend.

Disturbances in Turkey.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.); I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his Majesty's Government have received any reports relating to an attack by the Albanian Mohammedans on the town of Mitrovitza; and, if so, will he say whether any, and, if so, what representation has been made to the Turkish Government for the protection of the lives and properties of the Christian inhabitants.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord CRANBORNE, Rochester): According to reports received by His Majesty's Government, a large body of Albanians marched on Mitrovitza and were driven back by Turkish troops after some fighting. It is not stated whether the Albanians were Mohammedans or Christians. The Turkish Government are sending reinforcements. His Majesty's Government have received no information tending to show that the Christian inhabitants of Mitrovitza are specially in danger.

Exports of Mineral Water from Japan.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether arrangements will be made for the mineral waters exported from the Ports of Kobe and Osaka (Japan) to be indicated in the next Report of the British Consul at Kobe.

LORD CRANBORNE: His Majesty's Consul at Kobe will be requested to include in his next Trade Report any particulars respecting the export of mineral waters from Kobe and Osaka that he may be able to obtain.

Education Act—Liabilities of School Boards.

MR. LUKE WHITE (Yorkshire, E.R., Buckrose): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether in counties the liabilities of School Boards up to the appointed day under the Education Act will be apportioned and charged on each School Board district; and whether the proportion of grant, up to such appointed day together with any credit balance, will be allocated to the credit of each such district.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. WALTER LONG, Bristol, S.): I have submitted a case for the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown on certain financial points which have arisen in connection with the Act. I expect to receive the opinion very shortly, and I hope then to be in a

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† Royal Navy (Retired Officers)—Return of the number and rank of officers of the Royal Navy between the ages of forty and sixty years, who, by reason of compulsory retirement under regulations as to age, were upon the Retired List on the 1st day of April, 1903, and who, during their active service, qualified as torpedo lieutenants and became specialists in submarine mining, and showing the annual aggregate charges borne on the Non-effective Votes for such officers, in the following form:—

Qualified as specialists in torpedo and submarine service.

Rank.	Number.	Total annual charge borne on Non-effective Vote.
		£
Flag Officers		
Captains		
Commanders		
Lieutenants		
Total		

position to furnish the hon. Member with a reply to his Question.

Light Locomotives.

General LAURIE: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether any limit is prescribed for the size of light locomotives now permitted the use of the streets.

Mr. WALTER LONG: The width of a light locomotive, measured between its extreme projecting points, must not exceed 6½ feet. This is the only limit as to size, except in so far as may be caused by the restriction on the weight. As my hon. and gallant friend is aware, a light locomotive must not exceed three tons in weight unladen, or if it is used to draw a vehicle, the weight of the two together unladen must not exceed four tons.

General LAURIE: Could not a limit be put to the length of vehicles? There are furniture vans with motor car attachment, which take up the greater part of the roadway.

Mr. WALTER LONG: I do not think it would be practicable or desirable to deal with the length. I hope to make general proposals as to the control of these vehicles.

Regulation of Motor Car Traffic.

Mr. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Local Government Board if his attention has been called to the various means adopted on the Continent for the identification of motor cars, and the suppression of furiously driving them; and, is so, will he say whether he proposes to take any action in the matter.

Mr. WALTER LONG: The answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. As regards the last part, I have already stated that legislation would be necessary to enable me to deal with the matter, and that the subject was receiving my consideration; but I cannot at present give any pledge as to introducing a Bill during the present session.

Mr. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take into consideration the desirability of establishing a force of policemen on motor cycles with a view to imposing restraint on those who are driving in crowded streets at a furious pace to the danger of the public.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Akers Douglas, Kent, St. Augustine's): The best means of dealing with furious driving is a matter which must be left to the discretion of the Commissioner of Police. He informs the Secretary of State that he is gradually extending the use of bicycles by selected police officers, but that he considers the ordinary bicycle much more suitable for police purposes than the motor bicycle.

National Liabilities.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the amount of the aggregate gross liabilities of the State as at the 31st March, 1903.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Ritchie, Croydon): The hon. Gentleman had better reserve that for the Budget.

Annunciators in Parliamentary Rooms.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): I beg to ask the hon. Member for North Huntingdonshire, as representing the First Commissioner of Works, whether he is aware of the inconvenience caused to Members by the fact that annunciators are not in operation in the Tea Room, Reading Room, Public Dining Room, and Ministerial Dining Room; and whether he will arrange that these instruments are provided for these rooms during the Easter recess.

Mr. AILWYN FELLOWES (Huntingdonshire, Ramsey): There is no provision in this year's Estimates for any more annunciators, and the matter cannot be considered in time for the work to be ordered during the Easter recess; but it will not be lost sight of.

Mr. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): Will the hon. Gentleman also confer with the Committee of the Press Gallery with a view to placing instruments in their Writing Room?

MR. AILWYN FELLOWES: I have not heard that point raised before but I will certainly communicate with the Committee.

Scotch Education Certificates.

MR. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the Scotch Education Department will consider the advisability of cancelling the provision in Circular 340 which prevents a candidate for a leaving certificate selecting French and German for his group unless he takes Latin as well.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): A full explanation of the position of the Department was given in Circular 375, and in view of the special provision there made for pupils who do not contemplate a University course, no further action appears to be necessary.

Standing Orders—Consolidation Bills.

LORD EDMUND FITZMAURICE (Wiltshire, Cricklade): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if it is intended to proceed with the proposed new Standing Order in regard to Consolidation Bills.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I shall be very glad to bring in the Order to which my noble friend refers when a suitable opportunity occurs.

National Portrait Gallery.

LORD EDMUND FITZMAURICE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, in view of the approaching demolition of St. George's Barracks, London, if he will consider the advisability of providing, in any redistribution of the site now occupied by barracks and military buildings, sufficient ground will be reserved for a future extension of the National Portrait Gallery.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I understand the War Office intend giving up a portion of the barrack yard for the south extension of the National Portrait Gallery, if called upon to do so; but there are some questions which might arise between the military authorities and the trustees of the Gallery as to negotiations and adjustments about which no definite announcements have been possible.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. BLAKE (Longford, S.): Has the right hon. Gentleman made any arrangements with regard to the Second Reading of the Irish Land Bill?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It was intended to take the Second Reading of the Irish Land Bill on the Monday after the return from the holidays, the 27th, but as that day has been allocated to the discussion of the Vote of Censure in connection with the Penrhyn Quarry dispute, it will be impossible to take the Irish Land Bill on that day. I will, however, take the Second Reading as soon as I can after that date, but I cannot pledge myself as to the exact day.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Will the Bill be taken in that week?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I hope so—in that week.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): What Supply is to be taken when the House meets after the holidays?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I shall take Class 1 on the day that the House resumes, and then the Estimates as to the Board of Agriculture. These, I think, will occupy two days.

RESIGNATION OF MR. HAYES FISHER

MR. HAYES FISHER (Fulham): Mr. Speaker, I desire, in accordance with precedent, to inform the House that I yesterday tendered my resignation to the Prime Minister of the Office of Financial Secretary to the Treasury, and my right hon. friend has accepted it. As it is a matter which involves my personal character, I trust the House will give me their utmost indulgence while I shortly relate the circumstances which have led, so far as I can see, to the abrupt termination of my political career. I will ask the House to bear with me if I do not give them all the details of the case, because I am hampered by the consideration that the case is still *sub judice*; and from chivalrous and honourable motives which will be understood, I am desirous not to say anything which would injure anyone else whose conduct might be the subject of criticism. I will just place the salient facts of the case before the House, and, as the defence of myself involves others, I am quite sure the House will see that it is difficult for me to have sufficient control over myself not to be liable to say something which may injure someone else who cannot state his case before the House; and, therefore, I have reduced my statement to writing. The hon. Member then read the following statement:—

"In 1896—that is to say, seven years ago—I was approached by Mr. R. Wallace, K.C., a gentleman then in very large practice at the Bar in patent cases, and asked to contribute towards a fund of £5,000 required by a private syndicate for the development of an exceedingly ingenious invention in which he was personally interested. The invention interested me very much, especially as so great a scientific authority as the late respected Dr. Hopkinson, whom I consulted, told me that he thought so well of it that he was himself going to contribute £1,000 of the £5,000 required, and that he intended to give it his personal attention. Unfortunately he was killed shortly after in an Alpine accident. There were four persons, who each contributed £1,000 towards the fund required, of whom I was one. It was one of the essential conditions upon which I consented to contribute that the syndicate should continue to be a private one, that no shares should be issued to the public or parted with to them, no prospectus, and no directors' fees; and under these conditions we considered ourselves at liberty to make such arrangements among ourselves with reference to our proportion of interest in the concern as we thought right, and to allow the capital to be allotted accordingly. To show our *bonâ fides*, we were offered a large sum for the patent, but refused to let the public in, as we considered the patent insufficiently developed. In order to determine our share in the said invention, the chairman, Mr. Roger Wallace, transferred 2,000 shares to each of us, Professor Hopkinson, myself, and Sir Joseph Lawrence; and when this transfer was effected every member of the syndicate was fully aware of the fact and approved of its being done. These shares were part of a number of shares to which Mr. Wallace was entitled under some arrangement with the vendor which was not disclosed to me. I do not understand that had the syndicate remained a private one there was anything in the least degree questionable, objectionable, or unbusinesslike in the course adopted. The vendor, however, parted with some of his shares against our wish and in breach of the arrangement I have mentioned. The shares which he sold had been deposited by him with a foreign banker as security for advances, and were sold by the banker. I did not know of the transfer until some time after it took place, and immediately protested. It now appears that, in the opinion of Mr. Justice Buckley, when the vendor so parted with some of his shares the distribution of shares by Mr. Wallace (to which, when it was done, no one could object) assumed in law a different complexion. Other equally eminent Judges take an opposite view. If Mr. Justice Buckley is right, I can only say that I was totally unconscious of that fact and that I have been the victim of a breach of the original arrangement; but I cannot, looking back upon the course which I followed, reproach myself with having acted in any way, I will not say unworthily, but even with want of business caution. There is a second matter which his Lordship laid to our charge, and that was that during the last few years Sir Joseph Lawrence and myself had left the entire management of the syndicate to the chairman, Mr. R. Wallace. It is true that this was done; but I should like to emphasize the fact that the syndicate was not, and never had been, a trading concern, and that, apart from the development of the invention (for which I believe the chairman, Mr. R. Wallace, K.C., had special qualifications), there was no business to manage; and in this connexion I would also point out that the moneys for such development, and, indeed, the only money in this syndicate of any sort, kind, or description, was our own money. In the result the syndicate was wound up, being indebted to only a few creditors, and for no very considerable amount. Before the liquidation and since the liquidation, and, indeed, at all times, Sir Joseph Lawrence and myself have told the creditors that we would pay them—and this we will do. But, further, Mr. Justice Buckley, in his judgment last Tuesday, has suggested that we should repurchase at par the shares which the vendor transferred in breach of the arrangement that no shares should be sold to the public; for which shares, I need scarcely point out, he, the vendor, received the whole price. I cannot myself under the circumstances see that there is the least moral claim against us on the part of the purchasers of these shares, with whose introduction into the syndicate we were in no way concerned and from whom neither we nor the syndicate derived any benefit. And I am advised that there is no legal claim, so that his lordship's suggestion seems to me to be very much a counsel of perfection. However, he has thought right to make it, and although I am not a rich man I will not have it said that anybody has lost money through me. And this is the view that Sir Joseph Lawrence also shares; and we yesterday handed to our lawyer cheques for £5,000, which is more than sufficient to pay every creditor and the shareholders in question. The Judge was good enough to state that in his opinion there was no ground for attributing to either of us any want of personal integrity. And may I also point out that we made no profit of any sort or description, that we drew no director's fees, that we issued no prospectus of any kind, and that I took up and paid for in cash over 1,100 shares, and that I have advanced the company money which I have not been repaid, so that I have lost sums in connection with the matter which to me are heavy and considerable."

Now, some people may say, "Why did you not make this statement before?" Well, I was advised by the very highest legal authority that I ought not to address myself to the Press, and I ought not to make any statement to this House while the case was still *sub judice*, and until I had carried out the direction of the learned judge; and my own sense of right and wrong told me that the one important matter for me was to pay everybody so that nobody could say they had lost a penny through me. I was not in a position to do that until to-day. I only had a few days, and, as I have said, I am not a rich man. I was not in a position until to-day to make that statement to the House. I can only say Sir Joseph Lawrence and I have lodged the money, and every shareholder, and every contributor, and every creditor can have back every single penny that is due to him. I have wronged no man: I have myself been greatly wronged, and I bow to the full force of the terrific punishment which has come upon me for this error of judgment committed seven years ago. Some people may say, "Why do you resign?" I say emphatically not because I think I am unfit to hold the high office under the Government I held until a day ago, but because I accept the judgment of those on whose judgment I rely—for we are not always good judges in our own case—that the censure of a certain judge, to which wide circulation has been given, renders me open to attack inside and outside this House in the conduct of the business of the Treasury, and, instead of a source of strength, I have become a source of weakness to the Government to which I am absolutely devoted. All I will ask of my right hon. friend the Prime Minister, to whom I know these proceedings may be even more painful than they are to me, is that he will say, that whatever I have done, however I may have been remiss in my own private business, during the time I have had the conduct of the financial business of this country entrusted to me I have not been remiss or careless, I have not shown any want of prudence or caution, and I have not shown any want of capacity. I have been for nearly eighteen years a member of this House, and for nearly eight years a member of this Government. If I have neglected my private affairs, it is because I have devoted the whole of my time to the service of the House. In seven years I only missed three divisions, public or private, which I think will show, at all events, that my whole life has been devoted to this House. In conclusion I wish to say how deeply touched I am by the kindly messages of sympathy which have come from political opponents who might have used this opportunity to say something harsh about me, and how much I shall always treasure them.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: My hon. friend has made an appeal to me in the concluding part of his speech to which I respond not only readily, but most gladly. If anything could have increased the sympathy which I am confident was felt when first these unfortunate transactions were known—if anything could increase the sympathy which has been felt in all quarters of the House with my hon. friend—it is the statement which he has just made to us. And everybody, I think, will admit that he has behaved, under most trying and difficult circumstances, not merely as we should all anticipate, as a man of high integrity and high honour, but as a man who carries scrupulosity in the matter of dealing with those who he thinks have suffered in his transactions to an extent which I think must command the admiration of all those who have heard him and of those who have an opportunity of reading what he has said. My hon. friend has asked me to bear testimony to the zeal and efficiency with which he has carried out his public duties in this House and in his office. That testimony I most gladly give. My hon. friend and I have been closely associated in political work now for many long years. My hon. friend and I first came into close political and personal relations so far back as 1887, when he gave me valuable assistance in a very trying political portion of my public administrative work. Since then my hon. friend has been actively engaged in political work. He has, in and out of office, devoted himself with zeal and ability to the labours which this House throws upon the most zealous of its sons; and though he has necessarily, and as a matter of course, being as he is a strong party man, found himself divided by sharp differences from many of those with whom he has sat in this House and whom he has addressed to-day, I do not believe that he has one single enemy. Few things more painful have ever happened to me, in my political life at all events, than the events of the last few days; and I can only assure my hon. friend that I am quite confident that the course which he has taken in this House, and outside this House, in connection with this unfortunate affair —I am perfectly confident that all he has done and all he has said will augment the esteem in which he is held by his opponents, and even increase, if that were possible, the affection and confidence of his friends.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: It is, of course, no part of the duty, nor would it be the desire, of this House to pronounce any opinion whatever upon the legal question which may be still pending in this matter. But there will be a universal feeling in this House of sympathy with the hon. Member, and sympathy increased by the fact that we believe in a difficult, delicate and unfortunate situation he has done the right thing. The hon. Member has addressed us in terms which must engage for him an increase of respect from every one who has heard him. His conduct, not only previously in tendering the resignation of his office, but to-day in the recital that he has made of the steps he has taken, I think shows us all that we were not mistaken in the belief that in our experience he was a man deserving of our respect and regard. I will not dwell upon the matter. I think it is unnecessary to go further. But while we deeply regret the circumstances which have led to the interruption of his official career, we still hope that he will continue, at all events, to be a Member of the House, for which he is so well calculated to do useful service.

*MR. BLAKE: Perhaps there are reasons why this painful incident should not close without an expression of opinion from these benches. We heartily re-echo the expressions which have fallen from the First Lord of the Treasury and the Leader of the Opposition, believing that what has happened to-day, however painful it may be to the hon. Member himself, has vindicated his own reputation, and also maintained the honour and standing of this House.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Ordered, That the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills do examine the Port of London Bill with respect to compliance with the Standing Orders relative to Private Bills.—(*Mr. Gerald Balfour.*)

NEW BILLS.

PARLIAMENTARY VOTERS AND ELECTIONS BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to the Qualification and Registration of Parliamentary Voters and to Parliamentary Elections, and to the Expenses of Returning Officers; and for other purposes in relation thereto," presented by Mr. John Sinclair; supported by Mr. Ashton, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Lloyd-George, and Mr. Ure; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 1st July, and to be printed. [Bill 145.]

CROFTERS HOLDINGS BILL.

"To amend The Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1886," presented by Mr. Cathcart Wason; supported by Mr. Bignold, Mr. Leveson-Gower, Mr. Dewar, Mr. Harmsworth, Mr. John Edward Gordon, and Mr. Weir; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 22nd April, and to be printed. [Bill 146.]

ECCLESIASTICAL DILAPIDATIONS BILL.

"To amend the law relating to Ecclesiastical Dilapidations," presented by Major Rasch; supported by Colonel Tufnell, Sir John Kennaway, and Mr. Vicary Gibbs; to be read a second time upon Friday, 24th April, and to be printed. [Bill 147.]

BRITISH AND IRISH MEAT PROTECTION BILL.

"To prevent Foreign and Colonial Meat being sold as British and Irish Meat," presented by Mr. Alfred Davies; supported by Dr. Farquharson, Mr. William Redmond, Major Rasch, Captain Norton, Mr. Maconochie, Mr. Joyce, and Mr. Vaughan-Davies; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 29th April, and to be printed. [Bill 148.]

LICENCES RENEWAL AND TRANSFER BILL.

"To restrict, for a limited period, the powers of justices to refuse the Renewal or Transfer of Licences in certain cases," presented by Sir William Hart Dyke; supported by Sir James Fergusson; Mr. Bagot, Mr. Whitmore, Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, Major Rasch, Mr. Goulding, and Mr. Cripps; to be read a second time upon Friday, 1st May, and to be printed. [Bill 149.]

CHEAP TRAINS BILL.

"To amend the law relating to Cheap Trains for the Working Classes," presented by Captain Norton; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 21st July, and to be printed. [Bill 150.]

RAILWAYS (ELECTRICAL POWER) BILL.

"To facilitate the introduction and use of Electrical Power on Railways," presented by Mr. Gerald Balfour; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 21st April, and to be printed. [Bill 151.]

SUNDAY TRADING (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"For the regulation and control of Sunday trading in Scotland," presented by Mr. Cameron Corbett; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 23rd April, and to be printed. [Bill 152.]

CLUBS REGISTRATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"For the Registration and Regulation of Clubs in Scotland," presented by Mr. Cameron Corbett; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 23rd April, and to be printed. [Bill 153.]

LONDON EDUCATION BILL.

*The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the BOARD of EDUCATION (Sir William Anson, Oxford University): I rise to ask leave of the House to introduce a Bill to extend and adapt the provisions of the Education Act of 1902 to London. I wish I could have asked it simply to extend the provisions of the Education Act of 1902 to London. My task, though perhaps not uncontentious, would then have been to some extent simplified. But the circumstances of London are such that a mere extension of the Act of last session to London would have had somewhat unexpected results. The whole area of the administrative County of London is covered with great boroughs which have recently acquired all the paraphernalia of municipal government, not technically qualified under the Act of 1902 to assume the autonomy given to the county boroughs, and, to some extent, to non-county boroughs and urban districts, but still in such a position, of such a size, of so high a rateable value, and of so great an extent of population that it would have been practically impossible to ignore these boroughs in any Education Bill for London. Supposing we had applied the Act of last session and passed over the boroughs in absolute silence, I think that Camberwell and Westminster might fairly have said, "Why are we to be treated as if we were non existent, when Wimbledon and Chiswick have a considerable measure of autonomy, and are making their own committees and conducting their elementary education, and, to some extent, their secondary education?" Supposing we had taken another course. Supposing these boroughs had been technically in a position which would have enabled them to take over the rights and duties of the boroughs under the Act of 1902. What, then, would have been the position of the London County Council? The only thing to which I might compare it would be the position of some feudal king or emperor of the Middle Ages, with a titular sovereignty extending over a vast area, entirely engrossed and covered by great feudal lords as important as and sometimes more formidable than himself, or so wholly independent that this titular sovereignty was little more, if anything more, than a shadow. I think the London County Council would hardly have thanked this House for placing them in such a position—a position in which they would have found a number of the great boroughs around them absolutely independent and having powers of secondary education over a certain number of boroughs within their area. But if that would have been the unsatisfactory effect on the County Council, what would have been its effect on the education of London? I pass over the difficulties which the boroughs, unused to educational duties, would have encountered in the region of secondary education and in dealing with the miscellaneous resources which they would find at their disposal in each different borough area. But in the region of elementary education London has been governed as a whole for more than thirty years. There has grown up an elaborate, highly-organised organisation—the organisation of the London School Board. Would it have been possible to break up that organisation and distribute it among the boroughs, asking them to work out such a scheme of elementary education as they could from the particular fragment that happened to be assigned to them? Would that have been fair to the boroughs, and would it have been fair to the children of London? The School Board of London, if it has done nothing else, has made one authority for London, at any rate for elementary education, a necessity in the educational government of London.

I take it, then, as the basis of the discussion that there must be one authority for London. How are we to acquire that authority? We may have an authority directly constituted for the purpose, or, to use a convenient barbarism of the day, we may have an *ad hoc* body. You may have an *ad hoc* authority in two ways—by direct election or by the composition of a suitable body for that particular purpose. I think a body constituted for a particular purpose may fairly be called a body constituted *ad hoc.* I refer at this moment to the form of *ad hoc* which is obtained by the process of direct popular election. It has been stated in this House, and elsewhere, that the proper way to get an educational authority in London is to work upon the lines of the School Board, abolish the cumulative vote, multiply the electoral areas, and take your directly-elected authority for all educational purposes. I propose to offer some criticisms upon that process of constituting an educational body; but I desire to guard myself in this, that I do not wish, in any words which I may use in disparagement of a directly-elected body, to be supposed to be drawing a moral from the School Board. The vaulting ambition which resulted in the Cockerton judgment, and which has brought the London School Board so prominently before the notice of the House in recent years, was clearly not the result of direct election. If I might venture to hazard a reason for that action of the School Board, it would be that the School Board—and I, for one, do not blame them—have put into force a maxim, which, in the earlier days of our legal system, was used to great advantage in the development of English law, the maxim *boni judicis est ampliare jurisdictionem.* The School Board, feeling itself competent, enlarged the bounds of its jurisdiction—unhappily, enlarged them beyond the bounds of the law—and the Cockerton judgment was the result. I put that aside as not by any means the result of the direct popular composition of the London School Board. But I think that direct election does lead to certain unfortunate characteristics with an educational body. The first of them is that, if such a body is worth anything, it is bound to be an extravagant body. You get a body of persons elected for a particular purpose—for the education of London. You get them divorced from all other financial considerations except those which arise in connection with their educational work; and, as in the case of the London School Board, they have a blank cheque on the ratepayers. Surely, if such a body, having these powers, really cares about its work, it is necessarily, properly, inevitably an extravagant body. I can only say this, that if the Board of Education were cut adrift from the financial arrangements of the country, were freed from all Parliamentary and Treasury control, and were given a free hand upon the Consolidated Fund, I feel certain, at any rate, so long as I retain a position at that Board, my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer would pass wakeful nights and anxious days considering how he was to explain to the taxpayer and to console him for the inroads which I should certainly make on the financial resources of the country.

Then, again, a directly-elected body, I think, does tend to over-centralisation. You get a body of persons elected for a particular purpose, anxious to carry out that particular purpose, confident that no one can carry it out so well as themselves. The result is that nothing can be done over a vast area without the direct authority of this body, which supervises the education of the area. As a result there is delay, there are defects of administration, and there is what is far more important—the loss of local interest, the loss of all the resources which you might draw upon if you decentralised your work and shared your duties and your power with the places which are in more immediate connexion with the various educational centres scattered about all over the area. But there is a more serious objection. Would a directly-elected authority give you what you want? In elementary education I do not think this has been felt so much, partly because the cumulative vote enabled certain denominational interests to be represented on the London School Board and partly because the whole question of elementary education for most purposes, at the election of the School Board, turned on the simple issue of whether more or less should be spent. But if you are to constitute an authority for the whole of London for all educational purposes, you want to secure the representation of a great variety of interests, you want to secure that every type of education shall find its place, that none shall be neglected, and that your authority shall fairly co-ordinate University, secondary (both higher and lower), and elementary education, and shall work out a scheme of technological education and the training of teachers, covering that wide field which we are constantly dealing with at the Board of Education in our relations with County and Borough Councils all over the country. Are you likely to get that out of a directly-elected body? Is the average ratepayer likely to be induced to vote for A, whom he does not know at all, as against B, whom he knows very slightly, because A, represents technology or the training of teachers, and that element is much wanted on the local education authority? I do not think that this process of election would get what you want. It would not be possible to assist such a body by adding experts to its numbers; because it would fairly say, "We are elected for the sole purpose of conducting the education of London. What need have we of expert or other information?" And not only would you not get what you want, you might very likely get what you do not want. In a general election for educational purposes, conducted over a vast area, and with an electorate not specially versed or interested in the subject matter in hand, you might get London swept by some wave of religious controversy. You might get some professional interest, some particular need of the teacher, made a predominant factor in an election of the educational authority, and you might get a body of men and women returned who would prefer some non-educational consideration to everything else that might be brought forward, and read that into every topic under discussion. The voter at an election of this sort might vote for a candidate because of his political sympathies; or because of his religious sympathies; he might vote for him on social grounds, because he knows him to be a good sort of man; or he might vote for him on professional grounds—because you must bear in mind that one influence is constantly and persistently brought to bear, the influence of the teachers and of their union, which, whether good or bad, is always with us and is always active in the assertion of the teachers' interests. There is another question the consideration of which runs rather counter to the acceptance of a directly-elected authority.

I have said the voter will not always or often vote on educational considerations. There is yet the question whether he will vote at all. At the last School Board election not above 18 per cent. of the electorate went to the poll. I believe that was a slack time and that the average percentage is 25. I have heard it said in these discussions on education authorities what a great stimulus is given to a man who cares about education if he is placed on a board or council, or whatever it may be, as the result of direct popular election and knows he has the voice of the people at his back. Supposing I was a candidate, which I never have been, at a School Board election, and that I really care, as I do care, about education, what stimulus would it offer to me to reflect that in this matter, which I really had at heart, more than 80 per cent. of the electorate had not taken the trouble to go to the poll. I think really that the results, the figures of the School Board elections, go a long way to condemn, for that one reason, a directly-elected authority for London. From what I have said it will be seen that I do not propose to recommend a directly-elected authority, and that in consequence one object of this Bill will be the abolition of the School Board. Do not let it be supposed that I am not aware of the importance or the responsibility of such a step. The School Board has many enemies, but I have never been one; the School Board has some faults, but when I have touched upon them I hope it has been lightly. No one can go about among the great board schools of London and not become aware that the School Board has placed under an immense obligation the children and the parents of the children of London. I say frankly that I feel the full responsibility of advocating a measure which has for one of its purposes the abolition of the School Board. I should not be here to do it if I were not confident that I can submit to the House a body better constituted and better designed for the work which there is for it to do. I said there was another mode of constituting an *ad hoc* authority. It has been suggested that the education of London should be launched in a twin ship with the Water Board, and that a body could be constituted on the lines of the Water Board which would effectively deal with the education of London. I am fully aware, and I am prepared to maintain, that you could get a very good education authority on those lines; but I do not propose to recommend to the House a departure from the policy which the Government laid down last year on the subject of education—namely, that education should be linked with municipal government. I have set aside the boroughs, the directly elected authority, and a Board like the Water Board; and I come to the London County Council.

The object of this Bill is to place the London County Council to a great extent in the position in which councils are placed under the Act of 1902. The distinct, the cardinal feature of the Bill is to make education a part of our municipal institutions; and, in explaining the mode in which we attacked this problem, having regard to the conditions of London, I propose to go through, briefly and in outline, the changes which it will be necessary to make in the Act of last year. The London County Council is the local education authority for London. In Part II. of the Act the London County Council will have the rating powers of the county boroughs. The boroughs cannot rate themselves, with the exception of Woolwich. So far as Part II. of the Act is concerned, the change is slight; and the London County Council, with the great resources which are present in London, with the technical instruction money, with the large contributions which it receives from the trustees of parochial charities and other sources, will have no difficulty, I hope, in extending the work of Technical Instruction Committees to meet the requirements of London as far as secondary education is concerned. Now I come to Part III. The local education authority, as in the Act of last session, takes the place of the School Board and the Technical Education Committee. We make no change in its general powers, but there is a change in the matter of management. The voluntary schools will remain in precisely the same relation to the local authority as they do under the Act of 1902. In the matter of Council schools we propose to attempt a certain amount of decentralisation. The School Board managers have had practically no administrative power whatever, although they have exercised an admirable influence in visiting schools, in establishing friendly relations with the teacher, with the children, and with the parents of the children, and in that way have very largely promoted the good attendance of the children and the easy working of the schools. We want to avoid this centralisation; we want to avoid a condition of things in which not a pane of glass falls to the ground but it must be made known to the central office on the Thames Embankment, with all the delay necessary to such a gradual process of getting repairs attended to. Therefore we propose to give the management of the Council schools to the Borough Councils. The Borough Councils will be subject to the general directions of the local education authority, who will have the control and general direction of education. We propose to give to the Borough Councils the general management subject to this, and we propose to give them the appointment and the dismissal of the teacher, the custody of buildings, and where a new school is to be provided, subject to the determination by the local authority of the area to be provided for and the amount to be expended, the selection of the site. The Borough Councils will have the power to exercise their management through committees, consisting wholly or partly of persons who are not members of the councils, and in this way we shall retain the assistance of the existing managers who have done such useful work in the past. The Borough Councils will form their committee to deal with their respective schools or groups of schools, but the persons who manage the schools will be responsible to the ratepayers. I hope we shall thus get, through the agency of the committee, the continued assistance of persons who have worked on the management of the schools in the past, while we shall have the central control and general direction of the local education authority. In that way we hope to diminish the existing centralisation of the School Board system and to excite local interest and patriotism. We hope also that in this way we shall secure that the management of the schools will be as efficient as ever it was under the School Board, and that there shall be more local connection with the area the school represents, and more interest created among the ratepayers.

There are two other matters to which I ought to refer before I pass from this subject and which deserve the attention of the House. It was frequently asked in our debates last session what was the definition of "management." Management is no doubt a difficult thing to define. Certain things are obviously control, while others are as obviously management. There may be a border line between the two which may lead to differences of opinion; and we propose that, if such differences of opinion arise and there is a dispute between the local education authority and the Borough Council, a report shall be made to the Board of Education, who will determine it, and who, I think, are quite capable of determining what is management and what is control in the particular circumstances of the case. There is yet another important matter. It is possible that management may not always be properly conducted. It is conceivable that a council or a committee of a council may be negligent in the discharge of its duties in respect to management. We make provision, if that is the case, that the local education authority should come in and, with the consent of the Board of Education, assume the management and take care that its own directions are carried into effect.

I now come to a more important part of the subject—the scheme for the constitution of the committees. There, again, we are impressed with the importance of associating with the local education authority all interested in the conduct of the educational work of London and of providing the County Council with the fullest assistance in the conduct of its business. There are thus various elements to be taken into account, the boroughs, the interests to which I will allude presently, the experience of the School Board and the County Council itself. Now it cannot be denied that the boroughs have taken some interest, considerable interest, both in the work of the County Council and in the work of the education of London. There are, I believe, about one-fifth of the London County Council who are also members of Borough Councils, and the technical instruction committee of the County Council has, I think, seven members of Borough Councils upon it. Of the School Board, again, one-fifth of the members are members of Borough Councils. The Borough Councils desire to be represented on this committee; and we propose that each Borough Council should send one member, Westminster and the City of London sending two. Then I come to the various other interests. There are persons who should be parties to the educational administration of London whose advice should be valuable to the London County Council, but who would not be there naturally as members of Borough Councils or as members of the County Council. In the first place, we must find room for women upon the education committee. The number of women on the London School Board is now, I think, as large as eleven, though it has been, I believe, as low as two. There ought certainly to be women who will represent all types of education on this education committee. Then there are the voluntary schools, who may wish to be represented on the education authority. That desire, I may say, has been fully and generously recognised by councils in the country in the formation of their committees, so far as they have gone. There are, then, the great educational bodies in London, the University of London, and the various types of public schools and separate institutions, and, lastly, there are the great contributories to London education, such as the trustees of parochial charities and the City guilds. We therefore think that not less than twenty-five places should be reserved on the Committee for persons of these descriptions, the experts, the women, the voluntary schools' representatives, and the great contributories I have referred to. Then it is desirable that, at any rate for some years, the County Council should have the benefit of some of the experience of the London School Board; and we propose with regard to these two bodies, the experts and the London School Board, that, as regards the experts, the London County Council shall form a scheme setting out the number in which each interest shall be represented and the mode in which the representation shall be obtained for the purpose of appointing these twenty-five persons; and we propose that it should also elect five members of the existing School Board to hold office on this Committee for the first five years.

DR. MACNAMARA: Will they form part of the twenty-five?

*SIR WILLIAM ANSON: No, these five will be in addition. There will always be twenty-five experts, and for five years there will be five members of the existing School Board. Then we propose to ask the London County Council to contribute thirty-six members to the Committee. For the first five years, then, this body will number ninety-seven. The question is whether it is too large or too small. I am somewhat fortified in this connection by looking at the Report of the Secondary Education Commission, who laid it down that for the management of the secondary education of London a body of forty-two would be necessary. I then add the number of the School Board, fifty-five, and so reach the number of ninety-seven; and, as the work of the Committee will be considerably larger than the work of the School Board and will include secondary education, I come to the conclusion that out of this ninety-seven persons the Committee cannot spare a single man or woman, having regard to the work they have to do. Then as to the popular character of the Committee. Of that body seventy-two members will be the result of election by the people. The Borough Councillors, the County Councillors, and the members of the School Board will all owe their places on the Committee to election by the people of London.

MR. LOUGH: Indirectly.

*SIR WILLIAM ANSON: Not directly for the purposes of education. As to the representation the London County Council will have on the Committee, I think that will not be said to be unimportant seeing that sixty-six Members of the Committee will be appointed in one way or another by the London County Council. I will not trouble the House with the detailed amendments to the Act of 1902 that will be necessary—they are small and of a drafting character—to adapt this Bill to London. There is only one other matter in which we depart from the tenor of the Act, and that is in the appointed day. The Borough Council elections take place in November and the County Council elections in March. We could hardly press for the operation of this scheme between the Borough Council elections and the County Council election. We therefore propose to fix in the Act May 1, 1904, as the appointed day, with the power which exists in the Act of last year to postpone the appointed day if circumstances make it desirable. I hope I have sufficiently indicated the lines of the Bill to enable the House to give me leave to bring it in. I hope, also, I have indicated the policy, the educational policy of his Majesty's Government as shown in the Act of last year and the Bill I am now bringing in. The force of that policy was sometimes lost sight of in our debates last session. We spent much time in the discussion of religious teaching and the domestic economy of voluntary schools and it was somewhat overlooked that there underlay those discussions a great educational purpose—namely, the co-ordination of all forms of education under one authority and the linking up of the education of the country with our municipal institutions. We aim at these great objects—to place all forms of education under one authority, to bring all forms of education within the reach of all, and to make education a part of municipal duty. We are nearing, I hope, the completion of this policy. I hope that hon. Member's cheers will be justified by the result, and that the education of the country will be no longer the result of the sporadic and variable efforts of School Boards and voluntary associations and technical instruction committees, of bodies of trustees and private enterprise, but that it will be a part of our municipal life. I believe that time is approaching, and that then we shall find that the care for the training of the children and the youth of this country, in body as well as in mind, has struck its root deep into our municipal institutions and become a part of the very life of the people.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to extend and adapt the Education Act, 1902, to London."—(*Sir William Anson.*)

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): I propose to state in the most plain and frank and unreserved manner, my opinion of the Bill, whose provisions have been so well explained to the House by the hon. Gentleman; but before I speak of the Bill, there is something else which I think deserves a word or two of notice. This Bill may be a memorable and notable Bill in the history of educational government, but the speech that we heard from the Treasury Bench marks an epoch certainly more remarkable; because the hon. Gentleman in his ardour against School Boards and against any form of *ad hoc* administration, treated us to a homily against representative government, more sweeping, more trenchant, more uncompromising, than anything that we have heard in this House since the days of the Reform Bill. The hon. Gentleman covered any School Board system—any directly-elected system of government—with his objections and his denunciations. [MINISTERIAL cries of "No."] He went over a list of their defects. He said they are necessarily extravagant. So is the House of Commons. One of the defects we admit in the House of Commons is that it is tending to be an extravagant body. Then he says the average elector, for whom he has evidently no great regard—[MINISTERIAL cries of "Oh!"]—is unable to discern between the good educationist and the bad educationist. A is a pleasant, agreeable person; B is a wonder when he gets upon the subject of technical education; the electors choose A. What does the Parliamentary elector do? He says you cannot get experts elected. Exactly what we hear when the best authorities on the Army and the Navy and all the different topics dealt with in the Departments of State cannot get into the House of Commons, and we have all to get our information at second-hand from unknown people outside. That is a great blemish, we are told, on our system. And then he says, as the last I have noted of the serious objections to this dreadful idea of direct representation in the matter of education, that London would be swept occasionally by religious controversy. Is there any representative body in the country that is not liable to the faults which the hon. Gentleman pointed out, and is there any of them more conspicuously liable to them than the House of Commons itself? I did not think I should live to hear such a sweeping denunciation of the very system under which we live. ["Oh!"] But I am bound to say it is only a frank utterance by the hon. Gentleman, —who, I think, had not been properly coached in the due reserve that ought to be maintained in such a matter—only the direct utterance of the natural sentiment we have been able to trace in a great deal of the legislation of the present Government.

Now, Sir, coming to the Bill, the announcement of its provisions has been waited for with the utmost interest and anxiety, and I would at once say that the proposals of the Government appear to me to exceed the worst fears of those who looked for a bold, consistent, effective, permanent solution of the problem. Now, Sir, I think it is worth while to recall the attention of the House to the magnitude of the problem. London is not merely a little spot on the surface of England which happens to have been omitted by accident or otherwise from the Bill of last year. What are the statistics affecting the work of this School Board of the Metropolis which you are going to destroy? Does the House realise that whatever authority is created under a Bill of this sort will have to be responsible for the daily care and guardianship of a number of people—of souls, shall I say, their bodies are but small—of future citizens exceeding the population of the largest of our municipal towns. Then there is this further consideration—that the duties the authority has to undertake are more vast and more trying than those under taken by any other such body on the face of the earth. In the year ended 25th March, 1902 the children on the books of the School Board were 546,370, and in average attendance, 462,840; and the teachers on the staff, 11,235. But the new authority will also have with the voluntary schools on its hands, 210,000 in addition. Therefore it will be responsible for the school accommodation, attendance, and training of 750,000 children in elementary education. But then, in addition, it will have the work of intermediate and superior, secondary and technical education, which, I suppose, may be put as contributing another 250,000 students, so that 1,000,000 of persons will be under the guardianship of this London school authority. Why, Sir, these figures are simply stupendous; and we must remember also the peculiar nature of their relationship, which is practically a relationship of guardians over children, and also their personal relations with the great body of teachers. These are matters which cannot be tested by figures or reduced to statistical form at all. Nothing in the whole sphere of municipal administration, I venture to say, is equal to the work of the School Board of London.

The question we naturally ask is, Why do you pass by the School Board? The object of this Bill is to abolish the School Board. Why don't you use it when it is there? From the earliest days when, under Lord Lawrence, it began to cultivate what was then a wilderness, down to the chairmanship of the noble Lord the Secretary of State for India, who did not think it too small a matter to occupy himself with, and the chairmanship of the present Minister of Education, who is the actual sponsor, if not the author, of this Bill—so that if the Government have erred, as I think they have greatly erred here, they have done so with their eyes widely opened — there has been no complaint from ratepayers and parents. [MINISTERIAL cries of "Oh!"] There has been no demand for change. Certain things we have heard. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge has made merry year after year with certain eccentricities of teaching in some subjects in evening schools under the School Board. Surely that is too trivial a matter on the ground of which to abolish this great machine for education. Then you had Mr. Cockerton and the over-lapping of schools of which we have heard so much. *Point de zêle* is the motto. Therefore away with them. Then as to the grievance of injury to the Church schools by raising the standard of education too high. That is also on virtue's side. Is our system of education to exist according to the will and pleasure of a few Departmental pedants and clerically-minded educationists? That is the question we have to consider. Having this great and efficient machinery established amongst us the onus of proving the ground for removing this body, which enjoys so much experience and knowledge and which has the confidence of the public, rests entirely upon, I will not say the accusers, because I am not aware that there is any accusation, but upon the executioners, who are sitting upon that Bench.

Now, the whole case points to the maintenance of a School Board as the school authority. If the particular mode of election of this School Board is faulty in some particulars, by all means amend it, but do it by a directly-elected authority. There must be a special body created for its purposes. The Government have abolished School Boards in the country in the interests of certain theories of education which they were not, after all, able to carry out in their own Bill, and in the interests, also, and in defence of clerical pretensions; but why should that treatment necessarily be applied to the case of London? London, as I have pointed out, is, from its very size, an exceptional case. You admitted it to be entirely exceptional by taking it out of your Bill of last year and dealing with it separately. But the Government, as the speech of the hon. Gentleman shows, are determined to de-democratise everything that they can lay hold of. We have seen this when the country School Boards were abolished. We have seen it in the Water Board for London in the Bill of last year. We have seen it in the Port of London Board this year, though I have not had time to examine that closely. And yesterday we were engaged—we modest Scotch Members—on a Licensing Bill, where exactly the same thing is being done. A certain show is made of giving popular influence at all events, if not control, with the little finger on the one hand, while with the full might of the right arm on the other—the mailed fist as my hon. friend says—they nominate and bring in irresponsible authorities to overweigh and override any representation of the people.

If that special body is rejected, then why not appoint the London County Council? The London County Council exists at your hand. I admit that it would impose a tremendous amount of duty on the London County Council, which its present members could not possibly discharge. But you might double the members of the London County Council, or in some way you might still keep the direct responsibility to the people. But now there are only to be thirty-six members of the County Council on this Committee out of ninety-seven. And this is called making education part of a municipal duty! Municipalising the control of education! Why, Sir, to withdraw those thirty-six members from their work, which is already heavy, would be enough to hamper and overwork the County Council, but not enough to give them power over education. It is exactly what I am saying—a little apparent concession to the representative principle, promptly smothered up and stifled by some other arrangement which puts it in a minority and really deprives it of power. There are three results which are possible in consequence of the County Council being treated in this way. One is that these thirty-six members will be withdrawn from their present work, greatly to the detriment of the work of the County Council. Another alternative is that the outsiders who are to be put on will do most of the work. The other—the last alternative—and I think the most likely—is that the work will drift, nicely and quietly, more and more into the hands of the Board of Education, who at the present moment are showing how solicitous they are to interfere, when they have an excuse, with the action of the local bodies in connection with education. But then there are to be the borough councillors, men who are elected to look after the lighting and cleaning of streets, baths and workhouses, and useful purposes of that sort. They have no mandate whatever on education, and they are practically irresponsible on the Education Board. [MINISTERIAL cries of "No."] Thus, what you will have will be a Water Board, a little less diluted than the Water Board, or, putting it in another way, a Metropolitan Board of Schools with just enough flavour of representation in it to prevent its being classed in the category of the Metropolitan Board of Works. It will be a curious board. I presume it will meet, like others, in the Privy Council Chamber, which is a neutral place on the educational question, and then we can imagine that borough and county councillors will look askance at each other while the superior persons, the experts and the professional wise, will search in vain for the true centre of gravity of the body into which they have been brought.

But now I come to a point which is perhaps most important of all, and that is the condition of management, and the arrangements which have been made for giving the management of the schools to the Borough Councils. Under the School Board management was delegated, and there was no little distinction between control and management. The right hon. Gentleman says there was too much centralisation. If a pane of glass was broken a great deal of time and trouble was expended before it could be mended. But that is only a small reason for altering the whole system. Let the rules of administration be altered to prevent such centralisation as that, and the whole object will be attained. But let the House mark that these borough councillors are to appoint teachers, and they are to have the controlling voice in the securing of sites. They are, therefore, to have the patronage and the actual government of the schools, and that it will be in the hands of bodies with no pretence to fitness for discharging these duties. [Cries of "Why not?"] You cannot lay down a principle more universal in its application than this—where you have patronage there you have power. The most powerful element will be those who have the selection of sites, and above all the appointment of teachers. The appointment of teachers is almost the most cardinal and essential duty that the education authority has to perform, and more depends on it than on anything else. There is more room for controversy and dispute and bad feeling over the appointment of teachers than over any other subject, and it is to be given, not to the County Council, not to the experts, not to the whole body acting as a Committee, but to Borough Councils. I will only say that system seems to me to be contrary at once to common-sense and to the public interest. I expect that when we see the Bill we shall find that it will legislate mainly by reference in the usual manner. The little knobs and corners upon which Amendments can be hung will be as few as possible. That is a way of course of getting round the House of Commons, and it has been so universally and generally followed of late years that one cannot sweepingly condemn it. At the same time I am sure of this, that there are many amongst us who will take the earliest opportunity—and every opportunity—of claiming to replace rights of conscience and popular control in the position that they ought to exercise in the fabric of our national education, and seeing that these proposals, as stated by the hon. Gentleman, so grievously offend against these elementary principles, I for one cannot give my support to the First Reading of this Bill.

SIR JOHN GORST (Cambridge University): I have listened to the speech of the Leader of the Opposition with the greatest possible disappointment. The right hon. Gentleman last year failed entirely to understand or to see the principle of the Education Act. He was led astray by certain details of the measure, and by certain matters which caused an amount of religious animosity which the subject scarcely deserved, and he wholly failed to understand or appreciate that the Education Act of last Session was one of the greatest democratic measures, one of the greatest schemes of delegation of power and authority to local authorities, which this House has ever passed. The Bill of last year, which is now the law of the land, has made the local authority, the authority elected by the people, and directly representing the people in each local district—it has made that the one authority for all kinds of education, elementary, secondary, technical, and University; and it has clothed it with powers of rating and spending money practically unlimited. Although in some parts of the Bill there are restrictions placed by Parliament upon the action of this local authority, yet in the main it has left the local authority absolute master of the education of the future. Let me recall to the House that in the discussions of last year, while in Part I. and Part II. which dealt with Secondary Education, the local authority was left a free hand, both sides of the House, and both political parties, insisted upon putting certain restrictions upon the action of local authorities which dealt with elementary education. These restrictions were put on by both sides of the House. Some of them may have been very desirable and necessary, but neither party is able to blame the Education Bill now, because the local authority had restrictions put upon it, and has in regard to elementary education not been left the free hand it was left in regard to technical and secondary education. This year the Government have brought in a Bill which is based upon exactly the same principle as the Bill of last year, and that principle the Leader of the Opposition in the speech he has just addressed to the House, has absolutely ignored. He said in his speech—

> "Why don't you make the London County Council the education authority?"

That is what my hon. friend the Secretary to the Board of Education said they were going to do. [OPPOSITION cries of "No, no."] At all events they were going to do it in name—[OPPOSITION cheers and laughter.]. According to what was said by my hon. friend the education authority for the County of London is to be the London County Council. The London County Council will have the absolute power of the purse, because no borough under the London area can levy any education rate with the exception of a borough which has made a halfpenny rate, namely, the Borough of Woolwich, and that will be preserved. With that exception the whole of the taxation of London for education is in the hands of the County Council, and the whole of the appropriation and spending of the money is in their hands, and neither Education Committees, nor Borough Councils, nor managers of the voluntary or provided schools can spend one single penny except with the sanction and permission of the London County Council. Is that not being the education authority in something more than name? There is the power of the purse which I believe alone and by itself, quite irrespective of any restrictions which either side of the House may choose to put upon the operation of the London County Council—I believe that that power of the purse will give to it, as it will give to other County and Borough Councils in England and Wales, the absolute power over education of all kinds. [An Hon. Member: It will give power to the Board of Education.] I cannot deal with everything at once. Therefore, when the Leader of the Opposition said that this Bill was intended to de-democratise the education of the people, I think he stated what was absolutely the opposite to what the operation of the Bill will be. The education of the people is not democratised now. The powers of the London County Council are very limited. They can only spend the local taxation money and the whisky money, and their spending of that money is restricted in a great number of particulars, which I shall not enlarge upon, by the Technical Instruction Act, which is still in force as regards London. The London School Board is a body, as it now exists, restricted by the Act which created it to the mere provision of schools and the giving of elementary instruction in them; and it has no authority or power whatever over the general education of the people, and even in elementary instruction it cannot interfere with any of the voluntary schools, nor can it make any incursions into higher education, either of a secular or technical character. Therefore, in London you have not a democratic system of education, but this Bill will give you an absolutely democratic system. The body to control education will be elected on a most popular franchise. It will have unlimited power of levying rates, spending money, and co-ordinating and providing education for the people.

Now I come to the action of the Board of Education. The action of the Board of Education in these matters is not very serious. It is only going to act as arbitrator in any questions arising as to what the powers of managers of individual schools should be and what control the County Council should exercise over them. You must have some sort of body to arbitrate between them, and I have no doubt myself that the Board of Education will scarcely ever be invoked, and I am sure that when it is invoked all parties interested will have satisfaction in its decisions. Therefore, so far as one can tell, the action of the Board of Education will be as innocent as it is under the Act passed last year, and under which the Board has not been able to interfere with the desires of the local authorities. There might be a case in which some local authority might not agree with the suggestions of the Board, but you cannot produce a case in which a local authority has stood up against the Board and in which the Board has not given way. Coming to the question of the committee, it is quite true that it does not contain what the committee under the other Bill contains—a majority of the local authority in its members. But that is a matter we may discuss when the Bill is in Committee. It is not a matter of principle, and for this reason the constitution of the committee does not interfere at all with the absolute supremacy of the County Council. It will have to take its instructions from the County Council, and carry out the general policy which the Council may desire. I do not care what the constitution of the committee is. It cannot help being a mere delegation from the authority itself, and it cannot set itself up as an independent authority. I have not heard any hon. Member who has been chairman of a committee say that there has been any friction between the Council itself and the Committees of the Council to which it has liberally appointed members not of its own body. There is a great complaint made of the boroughs, and it is said that they have nothing to do with education. But they will have in future. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition seems to have forgotten that these Councils are elected by the people. There is to be an election next November, and surely the intelligent electors will know that they have important educational duties to perform.

As to the question of managers, over which the House went almost mad last session, I always said that the very name " manager " was rather productive of error because these so-called "managers" cannot manage the schools as they like. Every single penny of their expenditure has to be sanctioned and allowed by the County Council. The teachers are appointed under the Act of last year subject to the approval of the County Council. [An HON. MEMBER: We have heard nothing of that now.] It is not in the Bill this year, but I suppose it will be. That is really a detail which is hardly appropriate on the First Reading of the Bill. At any rate, if they appointed a teacher without the consent of the County Council they cannot pay him because the money for his salary would have to be sanctioned by the County Council. I think if the House would disembarrass itself of the idea which was so industriously spread abroad last autumn that these managers were little tyrants who could do anything, manage the schools in their own way, set all the principles of toleration and reason at defiance, turn the schools into mere places where religious animosities were to rage and religious proselytism was to take place—if they would disabuse themselves of that idea and regard the managers as sober-minded and reasonable men and women who desired to teach the children and bring them up as honest men and women, they would see that this is really a great democratic measure, with complete financial control by the London County Council, and one which the House ought to allow the Government to introduce as carrying out and perfecting the great measure of last year. I think my hon. friend has hardly understood the traps that are laid for the representatives of the Board of Education about School Boards. If I had been making the hon. Gentleman's speech, I should not have said that one of the purposes of the Bill was to abolish the London School Board. I would have said that it was one of the unfortunate and regrettable consequences of the Bill that the London School Board must be merged in the County Council. That is saying the same thing as the hon. Gentleman, but it would have prevented that boisterous merriment with which his statement was received by hon. Members opposite. If you are going to democratise (I use the barbarous English of the Leader of the Opposition) popular education by placing it in the hands of that body which represents the citizens of London, it follows that the special body—the School Board which has done part of the work—must necessarily disappear. It is all very fine for hon. Members to make a great fight about the School Board of London as they did about the country School Boards last year. I sympathise with them. It is a regrettable thing that these bodies which did excellent work had to disappear. When I was in Egypt last winter there was a great temple—the temple of Philae—which had to disappear on account of the construction of the great Assouan Dam. Just in the same way as the temple had to disappear after its valuable work, so the London School Board, having done excellent duty, having deserved well of the country, and having deserved praise of future generations must now disappear in order to make way for a body more directly representative of the people and with larger powers to provide education of every kind for London.

*Dr. MACNAMARA (Camberwell, N.): I want to deal with one simple issue only. I would only recall last year's controversy and ask the House to remember that I did my best to deal with every proposition submitted in a strictly educational spirit. That one issue is a very acute and fundamental one, *i.e.*, the constitution of an educational authority for London. A number of friends opposite have stated to me that on this matter they have an absolutely open mind and that they simply desire to get the best educational authority for London—wise administration and economical finance. It is to that point particularly that I want to address my argument. I said last year I saw nothing essentially anti-democratic in giving the control of education to the Municipal Council wherever that is physically possible, and if you give it absolute and full and complete control. You might do that in a town of 10,000 people, but when you come to the larger urban areas, particularly to the great county boroughs, you are face to face with a problem so ramified in its minute details, so stupendous in its bulk, that you cannot genuinely municipalise the local control in that case because it is not physically possible. The Government tried it last year. If you try it you have at once to call in a very large number of outside persons not responsible to the ratepayers, and at a very early stage of your experiment you find that the town councillors having the multifarious work of the town and their own affairs to attend to, cannot give the time to their education committeeship which falls inevitably into the hands of the co-opted members and of the paid officials. So profoundly did I feel this that last session I appealed to the Government to retain the great School Boards in a perfected form so as to make it possible to control higher education, and I rather think I had the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University with me. The destruction of the *ad hoc* bodies was a great educational leap in the dark, and I feel that in regard to great towns we shall be confronted at a very early stage with an appeal from the municipalities—not of a party character but purely educational—asking us either to revive the *ad hoc* body for education or to so far increase the membership of the Municipal Councils as to secure that the work shall be controlled, when municipalised, by members directly responsible to the ratepayers. I believe that time will come. Now with regard to London, as a member of the London School Board, I feel that the Parliamentary Secretary, with all his great industry during the time he has been in office, cannot quite have realised what is involved in the problem of London's education. Here is a School Board with fifty-five members who meet once a week; it has seven standing committees and thirty-two sub-committees meeting weekly or fortnightly. Last year the members were called to 706 meetings; we had the control of 1.418 school departments, with 536,000 children to educate and 13,519 teachers to supervise; we had also ten special schools for the blind, eighteen for the deaf, sixty for the mentally defective, four for the physically defective, two industrial schools, three day industrial schools, two truant schools, and twelve pupil teacher centres. We have, at the present time, 251 groups of local managers comprising 2,000 people, in direct touch with the schools on our behalf, including 348 clergymen and 145 Nonconformist ministers. In addition to that we have the great central office on the Embankment, and the eleven divisional offices scattered throughout the School Board divisions, and they involve in officials and employees 2,000 people. Then there is the work of the voluntary schools with 1,500 departments, and 220,000 children—they have got to be taken over too. Most of them are in a state of chronic and hopeless bankruptcy at the present time—in London perhaps more so than in the provinces as a rule. Buildings are dilapidated, classes unteachably large, apparatus scanty and old, and the teaching staff, save for the certificated teachers, are juvenile drudges and young women who are unqualified.

With regard to higher education, the Technical Education Board consists of thirty-five members — twenty county councillors and fifteen co-opted members; it has eleven committees which meet fortnightly, and it is engaged on a very great and important work. They have secondary day schools, night schools, science and art schools; they have started the training of teachers; and they have a great and important scheme of scholarships. Altogether this problem of London's education involves 2,000 separate institutions, 20,000 teachers, 1,000,000 pupils, and a public expenditure of £4,000,000. That is a piece of work in detail, and in bulk, as big as the whole work of the London County Council now. It is a piece of work equal, or very nearly equal, to the education of the whole of Scotland. It is equal to three times the whole of the work of Wales. Now, the Government proposes to make the County Council the education authority—that is either real or illusive. If it is real, you are doubling the operations and the responsibility of the London County Council. But when I find this proposition put forward, I am compelled to turn to the opinions of His Majesty's Government on the work of the County Council as it now exists. Lord Salisbury said not long ago the County Council had already too much to do, and its members were suffering from megalomania. But if you double their work, who are then the megalomaniacs? The Colonial Secretary said it is quite impossible for the County Council to do the work they are now engaged upon; and he went on to say that if they were archangels from Heaven they could not do it. Last year the County Council had sixty-eight committees and sub-committees, and called 1,313 meetings to carry out its work. Since then you have detached fourteen members to join the Water Board. You proposed yesterday to detach eight under the Port of London Bill; there are also six detached for the Thames Conservancy and three for the Lea Conservancy. And now thirty-six are to be detached, and detached in such a way that they will be entirely detached and unable to give any attention at all to the County Council work. That is more than half the elected members of the County Council. If your proposal is real and genuine, then in killing the School Board you are wrecking the County Council. If your proposal is not genuine, then your scheme, notwithstanding the disclaimer of the hon. Member who moved the First Reading, is a "Water Board" protected from public censure or criticism, because it happens to have over its portals, in this ingenious scheme, the magic letters "L. C. C." You revive a principle which I heard the Prime Minister say in this House had been tried and been rejected by the people of London—the principle of a composite body elected on the principle of the Metropolitan Board of Works. I do suggest that the thirty-six county councillors, having all their other duties to attend to, will not be able to attend to the work of the Education Committee, and that the work of that Committee will fall into the hands of the thirty one borough councillors and thirty outsiders. In lieu of a body directly responsible to the ratepayers, you give us a "fortuitous concourse of heterogeneous atoms." That is a thoroughly bad scheme, and ought never to have been submitted to this House. It will mean that the apathy from which London now suffers as regards education will become more and more abysmal. At present Londoners take very little interest in education. What interest they do take is stimulated by the triennial elections. Remove that stimulus, and let a body of superior persons sitting in Spring Gardens or elsewhere have the control of education in London, and that apathy will become more abysmal still. The scheme is so bad that you cannot tinker with it. You cannot juggle with numbers. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University said that it was only a detail that the County Council would not have a majority. But even if they were given a majority, they would be unable to do the work. You cannot tinker with the scheme. It is essentially and fundamentally bad.

I will not go into the administrative details at this juncture; but there are two which I feel bound to deal with. First of all, there is the proposal that the Borough Councils shall select the site for a board school to be erected in its locality. That is a perfectly ludicrous proposal. I will not say that there will be any jobbery, although I have my own opinion about that. But I am quite sure that a Borough Council will not select the best site educationally. I happen to be Chairman of the Accommodation Committee of the School Board for London, and I know what will happen. Even in this House we have had experience of what the Borough Councils will be likely to do. In 1901, the Stepney Borough Council came to Parliament and protested against the site which the School Board wanted to take. It was discussed two or three times in this House. What were the facts? It was admitted that the Blakesley Street site was the proper site. The Stepney Borough Council said that a site must be selected elsewhere. I went down to endeavour personally to meet the Borough Council, because I agree that in these matters the Borough Councils ought to be consulted. What happened? I found that the site suggested by the Borough Council was an abominably bad site for a school. It was shut in, and had no air and no light, and adjoined a railway on which hundreds of trains ran daily. Why did the Borough Council select that site? Because it was an insanitary area; it had to be cleared, and they thought they would kill two birds with one stone, irrespective of the requirements of a site for a school. Ultimately the Blakesley Street site had to be accepted as the only possible site. I do not suggest that the Borough Councils will not select the best sites, but they will have other considerations in mind. There is another thing which the Borough Councils cannot get over at all. It takes about four and a half or five years to erect a board school in London; and, in many cases, from the time the site is secured until the school is built it takes about seven years. In numberless cases the School Board selects sites for what they call future requirements. We cast about and consider sites in districts where a school will be required in five or six years. There are no children or buildings in the locality; but we secure a site, with the sanction of the Board of Education, which may not be used for five or six years. But when we want it, and when the children are there, the school can be built at once. What will happen if this Bill passes? I do not approach the question in any partisan spirit. Take Poplar, with a rate of 9s. 9d. in the £.; or Bermondsey, with a rate of 9s. 4d.; or Stepney, with a rate of 8s. 3d. Can you ask the Borough Council of Poplar, progressive though it may be, or of Bermondsey, or of Stepney, to so far cast themselves into the future as to incur considerable expense, which will be thrown on the rates, in selecting sites which they will not be able to use for five or six years. None but a central body can do that, and when a Borough Council gets to work on a new school it will find that the school life of the children has passed away before the school is finished. Under this scheme, I can foresee there are going to be in this city hundreds of thousands of children, who, because of the lack of foresight on the part of these small bodies will not have any school accommodation at all. I am profoundly convinced of that.

Another detail is that the Borough Councils shall have a complete veto over the selection, the appointment, and the dismissal of teachers. What will be the result of that? Again I do not suggest that there will be jobbery. But there will be a great deal of local influence. At present one of the greatest difficulties we have in a great central body like the School Board for London, which is untouched by local interests, is to keep the Teaching Staff Committee, and the appointment of teachers free from local and personal influences. There will be a lot of local influence under this scheme. I can well imagine many of the teachers will be the relatives of members of the Borough Council; and I would put this to the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Board of Education, as an avowed educationist, that we are going to shut up the teacherships of London into twenty-nine water-tight compartments. Suppose a boy is a pupil teacher in Battersea, he goes to the Training College at Battersea, if there is one, and because of his influence with the Borough Council he will ultimately be headmaster in a Battersea Board School. Nothing could be worse for the teachers, nothing could be worse for the children, and nothing could be worse for Battersea than such an arrangement. This scheme cannot be tinkered with. It is inherently bad, and if it ever gets a Second Reading, which I am very doubtful about, then these two things will have to be fundamentally altered. You cannot give to the Borough Councils the selection of a site for a school, or the appointment or the dismissal of teachers. Naturally a man dies hard. I am the only representative of the School Board in this House; and I am going down with my flag flying if I get a chance.

The hon. Gentleman poured a lot of scorn upon a directly-elected Board of Education. I would suggest to the Government a piece of advice. I would ask them not to take my advice, but to take the advice of one of the shrewdest, most businesslike, and cleverest members of the present Cabinet. Lord Balfour of Burleigh was discussing education in Glasgow the other day, and there was some talk of an Education Bill for Scotland on the lines of the Act for

England. He said that he himself did not believe so far as Scotland was concerned in any scheme which had not its basis in direct popular election. That is a very refreshing doctrine, when contrasted with what we have heard from the Secretary to the Board of Education. What is sauce for the Scottish goose should be sauce for the London gander. As the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition said, we might simplify the number of the School Board areas, get them to County Council size, and we could then have fifty-eight representatives elected *ad hoc.* In order to avoid multiplicity of elections we could have elections on the same day, and on the same voting paper. It might be objected that that would abolish the cumulative vote, which provides for the representation of certain communities, and further that an *ad hoc* authority would not always be the best for dealing with higher education. But when we have got fifty-eight School Board divisions, and when they elect representatives *ad hoc,* I should have no personal objection to agree that there should be, by statute, co-option to provide for such contingencies as would occur in the case of the Roman Catholic Church, and also as regards higher education. I propose that scheme. Whom have I got to support it? The London School Board have approved of it in an overwhelming manner by thirty-one votes to fifteen. My seconder was a lifelong Conservative, a devoted Churchman, and the late leader of the Moderate Party in the School Board—Mr. Sharpe. It was supported by Sir Charles Elliott, a most distinguished Moderate and by the two Roman Catholic representatives, Father Brown and Father Beckley. Therefore, this is not a party question. It is not a question of Progressive *versus* Moderate. The scheme has the support of the whole body of managers who have been in touch with the board schools for thirty years, many of them being Conservatives, and many of them members of the Church of England. Before this Bill was introduced at all, and before we heard anything of the scheme now submitted to us, the Prime Minister at Fulham stated that it would be proposed to adapt the scheme of last year to the requirements of London. Now eight Borough Councils have declared by resolution that they believe that the only thing for London is a Board of Education directly-elected, capable of controlling all grades of education, and exclusively devoted to that purpose. They are Battersea, Camberwell, Fulham, Lambeth, which has a Unionist majority at the present time, Poplar, Woolwich—which I think has a Unionist majority on the Borough Council—Southwark and Wandsworth, Bethnal Green and Lewisham. Wandsworth is a curious case. The Council consists of sixty-seven Moderates and three Progressives; yet, it has passed a resolution on the lines I have indicated, and there is no shadow of doubt that when the County Council comes to declare on this Bill it will also, by an overwhelming majority, add its name to the bodies which have already declared that an *ad hoc* authority is the only practical principle for London. I do think that, without loss of dignity, the Government might agree to retain the *ad hoc* principle, modified to meet the case of London. I believe that the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Board of Education is anxious to do his best for education. I appealed to him last year many times, and not in vain, and I appeal to him now. I appeal also to the Prime Minister that it is only by an *ad hoc* authority, created in the way I suggest, devoted exclusively to educational purposes, and elected directly by the ratepayers of London, that we can secure wise administration and sound finance. It is only by that means that you can fan into active flame what is now the flickering spark of public concern for education in London. If you pursue this scheme that spark will be extinguished; but if you provide an *ad hoc* authority, it may be fanned into an active flame. Unless you do that, all the schemes for the betterment of education, in this Bill or any other Bill, must prove arid and futile and may prove entirely barren and abortive.

*Mr. W. F. D. SMITH (Strand, Westminster) who was somewhat indistinctly heard, was understood to say: Sir, I agree with my hon. friend who introduced this Bill. I see no reason to suppose that an *ad hoc* body would provide in London any more than in any other part of the country the authority most likely to deal satisfactorily with all classes of education. So much has been said upon a body which goes by the name of a Water Board Authority, that it may not be amiss if I, as a London Member, say that no London Member would agree with the adoption of such a body as that. This deals with neither the same areas nor with the same subject as the body created last session, and all the arguments which were used to justify the creation of that body are absent in the present case. There is this additional point, of which my hon. friend the Secretary of the Education Board has taken notice, that in the present case we are undoubtedly forced to abolish two bodies which admittedly have done very good work in the past, as to one of which the direct election was complete, and as to the other those directly elected were in the majority, and under those circumstances it would have been impossible to pass in this House a scheme under which the body was indirectly elected. Then we come to the scheme which my right hon. friend has adopted. The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down twitted us upon this side of the House with imposing a large amount of work on the London County Council. After hon. Gentlemen constantly voted against measures whose object was to confer greater powers on County Councils, that was an argument which the hon. Gentleman was entitled to use, but the House must remember that the Bills which we opposed were Bills which dealt with municipal trading in some form or another, and that with regard to the present case there cannot possibly be the same objection. I agree strongly with the hon. Gentleman opposite that if we thought for a moment that the London County Council were about to carry out the work of the London School Board on the same lines of centralisation as the London School Board has carried it out in the past, we should be opposed now, as we have been in the past, to transferring this work to the London County Council. To make this Bill possible, decentralisation is absolutely necessary, and I am glad my hon. friend has used Borough Councils, or committees of Borough Councils, to carry on a large part of the administration which heretofore has been done by the London School Board. Personally I am not qualified to follow the hon. Member who has just sat down in the details of London school management, but at any rate he will not deny that there are some who believe that decentralisation of this kind can be efficiently carried out.

Now I come to some of the details which my hon. friend mentioned when explaining this Bill to the House, and I am bound to say that they are details which would be more properly dealt with in Committee than on the First Reading of this Bill. There are some points on which I agree with the criticisms the hon. Member made during the course of the debate. As I understood, the London County Council is to be the central authority. The main principle of the Bill with which I cordially agree is, as I understand, that the London County Council, as the authority, do the work through a central education committee, and I venture to submit that for two reasons it is important to provide on that committee a clear majority of the London County Council. There are, as I understand it, twenty-five co-opted members, and if the London County Council has not a clear majority on the committee it will result that, so far as it can, it will select partisans rather than educational experts, and the object of having co-opted members will, to a large extent, disappear. In the second place, if the London County Council has not a clear majority on the committee it will not trust the committee, and consequently there will be a tendency at any rate to review all the actions that the committee may take. Therefore it seems to me if you are to have efficient decentralisation it is absolutely necessary that the London County Council should be able to trust the committee through which it works. Those are two points which I hope the Government will be able to consider before the Bill comes before us on the Second Reading. I do not think I need delay the Committee further on this matter. I will only say in conclusion that those who sit on this side owe a debt of gratitude to the Government for having redeemed the pledge they gave last year, and for having introduced a Bill which will be of great use, in the future, to London education.

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea): Mr. Speaker, I steadily opposed, though I did not speak against it, the Education Act brought in by the Government last year. I thought then it was the duty of the London Members to leave the education of the provinces to those whom it concerned, but the element of mischief revealed in the country Act has been developed to a remarkable extent in this Bill, which is to be a municipal Education Bill for the Metropolis. I thought the Act of last year was premature, unscientific, sectarian, and, on the whole, a doleful measure, but it had one element that the Government prided itself on, and that was that it was municipal. That might be true to a partial extent with regard to the Act, but it is not true with regard to the Bill of to-day. This is not municipal; it does not set up a directly elected body, and in no sense can it be regarded as anything more than a glorified Water Board with the defects of all systems and the virtues of none. That being the way in which I regard it, I cannot allow this Bill to go through without a protest. The Secretary to the Board of Education says this Bill does not extend but adapts the Act of 1902 to London, and he uses the word "adapt" instead of extend because of the exceptional nature of London, having regard to its rateable value, its great resources and the peculiar and exceptional circumstances which must be regarded in considering a matter of this kind. After having stated that I had hoped the hon. Gentleman would have given his reasons why an exceptionally strong board should have been set up to deal with these exceptional conditions, but after he had condemned the principle of *ad hoc*, in which to some extent I partly agree with him, he might have divorced himself from the *ad hoc* body and have dealt with the peculiar conditions of London by creating some other body better qualified for the work than that which he rejects to-day. He, however, has done no such thing. The hon. Gentleman told the House that this was not a Bill for resetting up the London School Board, that it was not a Bill for the creation of a Water Board, but that it was a Bill which would make the London County Council, to a great extent, the educational authority. Except that the London County Council will find the money, strike the rate, and place at the disposal of an irresponsible body of persons its vast rating resources, the London County Council has not that position in this Bill which the great authority of London warrants.

As a member of the London County Council, I am getting rather tired of seeing the Government make the County Council the banker and the loan-monger of all the prodigal sons of the Borough Councils and the spendthrifts of the superior persons that this Bill creates. If taxation and representation are to go together, if he who pays the piper is to call the tune, the County Council ought either to have less voice and representation on this body, or it ought to have considerably more. I protest against the Government causing the County Council to provide money for Water Boards that it cannot control, making it the banker to buy up docks in the management of which it has no effective voice, and constituting it the body to strike the rate and raise the money for an educational authority over which it has no direct practical control. The Government have produced this Bill because they distrust the Borough Councils and are disinclined to make them the sole educational authority in their respective areas. The very reason which induced the Government to distrust the Borough Councils as the sole educational authority for their own areas is the strongest reason why they should not have, as combined they will have, a preponderating voice, probably against the County Council and the "superior persons," in the determination of how education should be carried on. In a word, this Bill is introduced because of the distrust of the Borough Councils, mistrust of the County Council, and an extraordinary affection for experts in the region of education that nobody can understand. At a time when the Government or their partisans say that the County Council is over-worked, why should they continue to bring in proposals to detach members from the County Council for other duties? Fourteen have been taken for the Water Board, eight for the Port of London, two for the Thames Conservancy, two for the Lea Conservancy, and now thirty six for the educational authority, while others govern polytechnics, others are in Parliament, and others manage many of the educational charities scattered throughout the country. But there may be method in the madness of the Government. Do they want to dissipate the energies of this centralised body over a wide area, so that inefficiency of general services may result, and provide the Government with an excuse for dissolving it altogether? If so, it is a reason which is not creditable, and, in many respects, is as Machiavelian as some of us suspect. If they wanted the County Council to be an influential authority for education, the Government might have chosen a more excellent way—a way that would have removed the objections which the Secretary to the Board of Education has to the London School Board, and have given the municipal control that they have conferred in the country and which, personally, I should not object to see imposed in London.

There are four ways in which this problem might have been attacked. The Government might have had the courage to let the Borough Councils have nothing whatever to do with education, to eliminate the County Council, to get rid of the School Board, and to make a centralised State department solely responsible for London education. Why did they not do that? I could understand the Government taking such a course. Bureaucracy would then have been supreme, popular Government eliminated and the superior persons able to get all their own way. The Government dared not do it. London would have repudiated such a high-handed centralised method of so usurping the functions of local control in education. Another thing the Government might have done was to set up a directly-elected body, responsible for all phases of education, and for education alone. The Government decided not to do that, because they have compelled a body that generally answered to that description to commit suicide on the Embankment, and they have decided to have no more School Boards. A third alternative was to let the Borough Councils be regarded, in their own areas, as a provincial Town or Borough Council, making them responsible for striking their own rate, managing their own schools, and appointing their own "teachers." Why have they not done that? Because they know that the Borough Councils, by virtue of their *personnel*, their location, their qualifications, and their varying poverty and wealth, are incapable of being set up as the educational authority in this vast Metropolis. Having rejected these three alternatives, there was one other consistent attitude left with the Government, and that was to have made the London County Council, in fact, reality, and responsibility, the education authority. They have not done it. ["Yes."] They whisper it to the ear, but they break it to the hope. They make the County Council the banker for the Borough Councils, the mortgagor for this panjandrum of superior persons which the Government are continually exalting, to the detriment and contempt of the popularly elected body. The County Council is brought in only because there is no other body that can be trusted, in whom the ratepayers have confidence, and who are capable of raising the necessary money. Why was not the work really given to the County Council? I find the reason in the right hon. Gentleman, the President of the Local Government Board, sitting next to the Secretary to the Board of Education—that, and nothing more.

The fact is that County Council baiting has become a mania with the Government. But it will not be a mania long. I am convinced that nothing but an unreasoning prejudice against the County Council could have induced the Government to use that body as they have done. I do not altogether share the view that on proper lines the County Council would not be capable of managing London education. Its work in connection with technical education disproves much of the criticism of educational experts. Given that it is capable, as it is; given that it is energetic, which no one will deny; given that it is the only financial authority capable of handling education, it seems to me that this is the worst possible way in which the aid of the County Council could be invoked. My suggestion is—the alternative I have named being rejected—that the Government should have added thirty members to the County Council, allocating three instead of two to each division. They might then have converted fifty-two or sixty members into a statutory committee to deal with all forms of education in London, and the Council with its present power of co-opting outside men of experience, eminence and capacity, could have selected in its aldermen all the experts worth having, but not the kind of experts created by this Bill—men who have been to the electorate, who are gilt-edged duffers, and, having been defeated at the poll, look to the Government to job them on to a body where they will waste public money and do no good. It might be argued that the County Council was already overworked. Ways might have been found for lightening its work. The Government might have taken the asylums away and given them to the Metropolitan Asylums Board; they might have taken away its inebriate work, and possibly its industrial schools, and handed the latter over to a Hospital Board which some day would have to manage not only asylums and fever hospitals, but general hospitals also. Then they could have abolished the Water Board, and allowed the Council to do its primary municipal duty which has been taken from it. The reason for not adopting this course is an unreasoning prejudice against a body which is gradually winning its way in popular favour, as will be found at the next election. In spite of this snub, the contemptuous insult offered by making them the bankers of the Borough Councils, without giving them any effective control, this body will assert its will, and some day this Bill will have to be altered.

What do you give to the Borough Councils? I have no prejudice, and have never shown any, against the Borough Councils, but I say that there ought to be a uniform standard of education in the Metropolis which would enable the rich districts to help the poor, and the selection of masters and mistresses to be made by a central body that was above fear, beyond reproach, and not subject to suspicion; that was the way in which this Bill ought to have been constructed. The Borough Councils are to have the power to dismiss teachers. I live in a district in which about 800 schoolmasters and mistresses live; I once presented a petition to a railway company from 700 schoolmasters and mistresses for early trains from Clapham Junction. That means that school-teachers work all over London, but live in particular areas. I do not blame them. They come to Battersea because it is not in the outer darkness; they like it for its open spaces, and for the light and leading it displays in various ways. But what does it mean from the Borough Council point of view? It means that if schoolmasters and mistresses chose to bring pressure to bear on a borough council they could effectively do it in a circumscribed area through their votes, whereas in regard to a central body depending on half a million voters the pressure would not be felt. If the parsons of all sects and creeds care to link their destinies with the schoolmasters and mistresses we shall have the Borough Council element from any district sent to the central hotch-potch for education with a mandate to make the new educational authority the cockpit for sectarian strife or other professional interests with which a central body would know how properly to deal. As to the question of appointing and dismissing teachers, this proposal will locate men in certain areas and prevent the flow of metropolitan promotion over the total area; it will put round men in square holes and square men in round holes; it will degrade instead of elevate the profession; it will be an incentive to local wire-pulling and a temptation to jobbery such as would be impossible in the case of the School Board or the County Council. Then as to the selection of sites. One hears of the County Council only on the occasion of the battle of the bridges, when the Peckham Horatio is holding the bridge against the rest of London. We all know what happened to the bridge; it finally came down, and so will the Member for Peckham. But whatever may be the defects of the County Council, in the purchase of property—whether for asylums, technical schools, fire stations, or any other purpose—there has never been a suspicion of jobbery or lack of probity on its part. Why is that? Because they are able to pay a salary such as commands the services of probably the best valuer in London, and one of the best in the kingdom, who goes and inspects a site purely in the interests of the central authority, paying no regard to whether the Vice-Chairman of the Borough Council owns it, or whether it is a slum area, or whether it suits the interests of a railway company to get rid of a certain plot of land. He values the site from the point of view of the purpose it is intended to serve, with the result that his employers get value for the money he recommends them to spend. I am not so sure that that will happen if the Borough Councils have to appoint teachers and then select the sites.

Then as to the *personnel* of the Borough Councils. Within their areas and according to their lights many of the Councils do excellent work which is worthy of all praise from their constituents. But the type of man who gets on the Borough Councils is, speaking generally, the man who is able to give only a part of his evenings to public work. That is not the case with regard to the County Council, and has not been the case with regard to the School Board. Many great captains of industry, having got rich by other people's labour earlier than other people could, have spent the autumn of their days in making reparation by giving their services to the community they have exploited. I welcome them; that is the only sacrifice I think a rich man is capable of making, and many, to their credit, make it. But what boards do they go on? They go to the School Board or the County Council, whose committees meet in the daytime and frequently require their services on three or four days a week. The average borough councillor cannot do that. When he reaches a position which enables him to do it, he leaves the Borough Council, and, by gradations, goes to the School Board, the Metropolitan Asylums Board, the County Council, and finally he reaches the coping stone of his public career, viz., the Imperial Parliament. We have to deal with facts as they are. The borough councillor by virtue of his position, work, and surroundings, is incapable of doing that class of educational work as well as it can be done by members of the School Board or the County Council.

My last point is one that I ask the House respectfully to receive. I said that County Council baiting was dying, and that that body was winning its way into public favour by virtue of its industry, probity, and capacity. That is true. The Government have become so fond of its technical education work that they want to extend the area of the County Council to other forms of education. Surely that is a striking comment on the jibes, sneers, and criticisms, which too frequently have been directed against that body. The mere fact that the Government are extending the influence and sphere of the County Council into the domain of elementary, technological, secondary, and perhaps University education is a proof that that body is better qualified for the work than the Borough Councils; otherwise it would not have been given more than a third of the representation on the Committee. If it is sufficiently capable and energetic to have thirty-six out of ninety-seven members, why not make the plunge entirely and give the County Council, which raises the money, a clear and decisive majority in the expenditure of the funds they provide? The Government will not do that because they are afraid the Council will attract to itself a little more credit than it now enjoys. Let the Government be not too timid in this respect, because when their Water Board collapses, and their educational authority brings education to a deadlock, they will have either to re-create the School Board or make the County Council absolute and supreme, through its statutory committee, over all phases of London education. Unless they do that, they will have to kill popular control altogether in the region of elementary education, and that they dare not do. What the Government are doing by this Bill is to exhaust the London County Council, from which they draw some of the chief elements of their Bill, to introduce the Borough Councils into a region they had not asked to be allowed to enter, and to worry and weary the experts whom the County Council could elect as aldermen. They had accumulated in the Bill all the defects of all the bad educational systems that can be conceived. They have done this out of an unreasonable prejudice against a body they themselves created, and who, if it were given to them, would manage education very well. The House might rely that if you mixed sacerdotalism with main drainage there would be very little dogma left, and if High Church principles were linked with fire extinction, the County

Council could turn the hose on such men as Athelstan Riley, and these elements would be brought to their proper level. The Government want to be all things to all men; they want to please everybody, but they fail to please anybody. It is because I believe this Bill to be unworkable, and that it will be disastrous to education in London, that I could not allow it to be read a first time without passing upon it the severest condemnation in my power.

*MR. PEEL (Manchester, S.): As a member of the London County Council, and, moreover, a member of the Finance Committee of that body, which is peculiarly interested in this Bill, I desire to say a few words on its introduction. I congratulate the Government on having resisted the temptation to create a new *ad hoc* authority for London. I by no means agree with the hon. Member for North Camberwell that the London County Council, by reason of the work already cast upon it, is incapable of discharging the duties of the educational authority for London. The hon. Member seemed not to appreciate the fact that a quantity of the detail work discharged by the School Board was not to be thrown in its entirety on the County Council, but was to be given to the minor bodies. That principle of decentralisation I heartily support, as I support it in regard to other public departments, such as the War Office. But I failed to follow the right hon. Gentleman who introduced the Bill as to what is the precise authority that is to deal with education in London. I do not clearly understand where the power is to lie. Is it to lie with the County Council or with this new authority? I fail to see how it can possibly lie with the County Council if that body is to have only thirty-six out of ninety-seven members. I suppose he meant to say that the financial control would be entirely in the County Council.

SIR WILLIAM ANSON: The London County Council is the authority for all purposes. It cannot delegate its financial powers, but in all other respects this Committee will be an advisory committee to which the Council can delegate its powers.

*MR. PEEL: In that case I entirely agree with the hon. Member for the Strand Division that the Bill can hardly work in present circumstances. If you have a vast majority on this body, which has nothing whatever to do with the County Council, it is clear that there must be great friction, and that serious difficulties will arise between the County Council and the new authority. At the present moment, the County Council has full control over its Technical Education Board, but very few of the decisions of that body are reviewed by the Council as a whole. If you have a majority on that Committee who are not members of the London County Council, it is certain that these details will have to be scrutinised, examined, and gone into, and this will take an amount of time in the County Council which will throw upon it a burden it is really incapable of bearing. Take the Bill of last year. You had in that case financial control entirely in the hands of the Borough Councils, and in every case it was an essential part of the Bill that you should have a majority of that Committee members of the County Council. Only in that way can you have complete harmony between the County Council itself—itself the controlling authority—and the members of the Committee. Now, with reference to the bringing in of representation of the Borough Council, this course follows the precedent of last year. Under the Water Bill of last year you had a separate authority which had separate power of raising money and was entirely distinct from the London County Council, and was responsible to it in no way whatever. But if you bring in these members in this way you really throw the power of controlling education on to those separate members of the London Borough Councils. I myself believe that a far better way of getting the opinion of the different parts of London would be to enlarge the County Council representation and to secure that every portion of London was represented on this Board through members of its own body. That is a very practicable and possible plan. If you wish to have a large board, if you wish to have ninety-seven members or something approaching that number, it is entirely unnecessary as was suggested to double the members of the London

County Council. I entirely deny myself that as at present constituted, the Committees of the London County Council are so far over-worked that it is not possible to take members who are already on Committees, and add them to this larger number. The fact is that the Committees of the County Council, as now constituted, are larger than necessary for the work they have to perform. You have Committees of twelve and fifteen, where Committees of eight or six would do the work perfectly well, and the only reason why these Committees are constituted so large, is that of course they have greater authority and a greater number of heads when it comes to a vote on the County Council. I believe that without throwing a fresh strain on the County Council or absorbing the work of its members, you could get the best men possible, and you would be able largely to increase the number of thirty-six on the London County Council, and you would get a far more homogeneous and more powerful board, and one freed from the necessity of bringing in these representative members from the Borough Councils. It would be in harmony with the Council itself, and would be far more able to pursue a vigorous educational policy than if you hamper it with all those representatives from different bodies which are not connected with the London County Council itself.

I will only allude further to one detail mentioned by the hon. Member for North Camberwell, and that is with regard to the appointment of teachers. I certainly should like to see a change made in this matter. I should not myself like to see the appointment and dismissal wholly confined to the Borough Councils themselves. I think there ought at least to be some power of revision or veto on the power of appointment of teachers by the Borough Councils. Moreover, if you bring the Borough Councils on this Committee you really have them represented twice over, because they are first of all the authorities in your scheme of decentralisation which will have to carry out in the different districts the educational policy of the County Council. You are using them in a double capacity. You are making them principals and agents, and it is entirely unnecessary to force upon them that double *rôle*. If you have them in the case of agents who will perform their special duties in the Borough Councils, then I think it is entirely unnecessary to call upon them to serve in the central body, because you will have all the local knowledge secured on the central body by the members of the County Council itself, who, after all, are elected by the different parts of London, and represent them very well on the County Council.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.): The Bill which has been explained to us by the hon. Baronet the Secretary to the Board of Education has received very scanty support from the other side of the House apart from the rather critical speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University. It is a remarkable thing that the hon. Member for the Strand Division, who might fairly be looked upon as one of the sturdiest supporters of the Government, should in this matter have made a fundamental alteration in the structure of the Bill.

MR. W. F. D. SMITH: I said it was a question of detail.

MR. LOUGH: The fact that the hon. Member said it was a question of detail does not in the least alter the matter. He struck a vital blow at the principle on which this Bill is founded. The hon. Member who has just sat down is a member of the London County Council, and he has perfectly distinct views regarding the measure. This a very cold reception for a Bill of the Government to have. It may be said that this is the First Reading, and it is not usual to discuss matters at any great length at this particular stage. But this is an exceptional occasion. The Government have introduced this Bill in order that it may be be discussed during the Easter recess by the public. Even at this early stage I think we ought to look at the arguments the Government have given us for destroying the London School Board. The first argument is that it is in order to establish unanimity between the present Bill and that of last year. May I point out that we have no precedent for pursuing such a course in the regulation of its municipal affairs by this House; London has received exceptional treatment. It has always been admitted that the facts of London might make an exceptional course necessary, and therefore the argument in regard to uniformity is really a very unsound one, and it would establish a precedent different from what the House has generally followed. The Prime Minister constantly gave us as a great reason for pursuing the course the Government did, in regard to the provinces, in the Education Bill of last year, that twice as many children were educated in the voluntary schools as in the board schools, and that, therefore, these schools could not be crushed out of existence. It is exactly the opposite in London. You have more than twice as many children educated in the board schools as in the voluntary schools. The fundamental fact with which the Government proceeded in regard to the country does not exist when they come to London, and therefore the Government might well have paused before they insisted on destroying the School Board here as in other places. We have an excellent system here and a magnificent institution doing splendid work. It seems to me to be perfectly un-English and contrary to the course the House generally pursues to sweep away such a body as the Government propose. There are no less than between 1,400 and 1,500 schools, over 500,000 children, and over £3,000,000 of public money being spent every year. The School Board has been most successful in discharging all this work. It was in the year that I first came to London that the great Bill was passed establishing the London School Board, and I have watched with interest the great work it has done throughout the Metropolis. The streets then presented a very different appearance from what they do to-day. They were crowded then with those miserable and suffering little boys and girls whom we used to describe as street arabs, and I have seen the London School Board grow up and gather all these children into the magnificent schools it has built. There has never been done by the State in any part of the Empire a more magnificent work than that, and yet the hon. Baronet pays but a scanty eulogy to this great body which he is going to lightly sweep away. You can easily get rid of it without getting another to do the work as well.

Notwithstanding all the absurdly trivial criticisms passed upon the School Board, I say that the House ought to pause and to have some feeling of gratitude for the public work it has done. It ought to pause before it destroys the London School Board. The hon. Baronet has told us that he is going to hand it over to the London County Council. But he hands over more important duties to the Borough Councils, than to the County Council. He has told us that the Borough Councils are to manage the schools, select the sites, and, I suppose, to build the schools and also to appoint the teachers. I want to say one word about the appointment of teachers. There are 14,000 teachers at present in the London board schools and 6,000 in the voluntary schools. I will take the Borough Council that I know best—that of Islington. It represents a twelfth of the population and area of the whole Metropolis. Therefore you will throw upon the Borough Council of Islington the duty of appointing 1,600 teachers. The County Council will settle the salaries, but they will not interfere with the question of patronage or prevent local forces getting to work when appointments have to be made. A central body would be indifferent to this pressure, but under the present Bill it would no doubt arise in the local areas and create great difficulty. If this is persisted in, it will strike a great blow at education in London. We are told that if any dispute arises between Borough Councils and the County Council it will be referred to the Board of Education. It is perfectly absurd to suggest that under these circumstances the County Council will have any control whatever over the schools of London. The Borough Councils will have control, and the County Council will be in the position of paying the bill without any control whatever. The Bill will not be made better if you give the London County Council the majority on the education authority. How can it be said that the County Council will appoint members to represent the University of London and the City Guilds? It will be perfectly impracticable for them to do so, because these members would come as nominees of these bodies on the County Council. The County Council has only thirty-six members out of ninety-seven on the authority, and therefore it will be put in the position of not being able to discharge the great work of education which the Bill seeks to put upon it. I am not satisfied that it would be wise of us to hand over this work to the London County Council. That body is too heavily burdened at present, and there is scarcely a session in which this House does not refuse to put any more work upon it. The other day we refused to give it the control of the water supply. If the Council is too much burdened already to take charge of this work, how can it take charge of the great work of education in London? London is so vast that it would be worth while to deal with it separately, and directly elect a body for that purpose. That body might be elected in one day like the County Council. The functions of the present School Board could be enlarged so as to deal with secondary and technical education, and the cumulative vote could be abolished. That would be a far safer plan than the one sketched out in the Bill. I believe that everyone in the House has listened to the proposals in the Bill with amazement, and I venture to think that when the minds of the people of London are brought to think it out, they will almost unanimously decide to reject it.

Mr. ERNEST GRAY (West Ham, N.): This Bill is alleged to be one for the better education of London. I hope the House will recognise that whatever makes for good education in London will exercise a great influence on the rest of the country. No one can deny that the elementary education standard throughout England and Wales has been set by the London School Board, and that excellent lessons have been given to the rest of the country by the Education Committee of the London County Council. The influence of the London School Board upon the voluntary school system in London has been of an admirable character, and but for occasional gentle pressure of that Board the defective conditions of many voluntary schools through lack of income would be much worse at the present time. I hope this Bill will be treated as a national Bill and receive attention at the hands of all Members. The question I have to ask myself is simply this—Will the proposals of the Government make for the better education of the children of the Metropolis? We have known throughout the autumn and early months of this year that the Government in dealing with London would most likely follow the principle set forth in their scheme of last year. The desire is logical and consistent, but I think there is a more important principle to follow, and a more important effect to produce than a reputation for logical sequence, and that is the influence of the measure upon the Metropolis and upon the children. I myself am quite prepared to see the Government lose its reputation for logical sequence if, in throwing that away, it can do something better for the children. Is the plan one that will make for the improvement of education, and is it even logical? I cannot resist the conclusion that it is neither one nor the other. I do not think it is the best body, nor do I think it is consistent with the principles of last year's Bill. In name the County Council becomes the authority, but in fact the County Council will not be the authority. The County Councils and the great Borough Councils under the scheme of last year were created the authorities for education, and I know that the County Councils have taken full advantage of that provision, and have taken care that far more than the majority shall be on the committee as directly representing the people. By that means only can the County Council become the real authority, and exercise complete control. All power will have to be delegated to the Committee, which will become the authority. The County Council will be compelled by weight of the influence, which the committee will be able to exercise, to grant the necessary funds to allow the committee to use the functions of the Council, and eventually become the authority itself. Let the County Council be the authority in fact as well as in name, or let the committee become the authority. London has always been treated on a different footing to the rest of the country. The magnitude of the task constitutes a full and sufficient reason for this differential treatment.

In a city like Birmingham it is not impossible for the County Council to do the work of education. Birmingham put the Act of last year into operation a few days ago, and no one is a penny the worse off for it, while many are better off. The Act will work smoothly there, but in London there is a peculiar position of affairs. The problem of local government is quite sufficient to occupy every bit of leisure of every man that has to deal with it, and the problem of education in London is also quite sufficient to occupy the leisure of every man. Do the Government desire to see spring up a sort of local politician who will attend simply and solely to the work of the County Council? No one in London can attempt to do this work, and do it properly, and do their London County Council work as well. This is only likely to put the work entirely into the hands of officials. It occupies a very large part of the life of a London School Board member to deal with elementary education; gentlemen who work on technical education committees devote their whole leisure to that work alone. We are proposing to do more; to those two we are adding other branches of education, amalgamating and co-ordinating all branches, and asking them to attempt to work out in the Metropolis some of those problems of education which have been barely thought of in this country, and with the large funds at their disposal to try new methods of teaching and new forms of education. And all this is to be undertaken by men half of whose time is to be taken up by ordinary local government, and who are to devote the remainder to this educational committee. The task is beyond their strength. They cannot accomplish it. That is the conviction to which I am driven. I would gladly accept the London County Council and give effect to the principle that the rating authority should be the controlling authority, but there is something to come before that, and that is educational efficiency, and also the efficiency of local government. We are setting up an authority which, in my judgment, will not only be incapable of efficiently educating the children, but which will also tend to make the London County Council inefficient. Have we not, in the main, on this side always taken up the position which I have now taken up? Have we not gone into the Lobby against every proposal coming from the London County Council to take over more duties? Have we not, through the Leadership of the Front Bench, said we must not give the London County Council more work; that it was already overladen; that we must not give it the control of the water because it already has its hands full; that that question is such an enormous one that we cannot entrust it to the London County Council. Does my hon. friend think that education is a smaller question. I think he will find that in its magnitude, and the difficulties that will have to be solved, education is a far greater and more difficult problem than ever the water question could be. How can we then, in all conscience, at any future date go into the Lobby against the proposals of the London County Council if we pass this measure? I am going to be consistent for once in a way. I am going to vote against this power being put into the hands of the London County Council, because it seems to me it cannot discharge the obligations and have due regard to its own efficiency. It certainly cannot perform these duties with any prospect of maintaining the level of efficiency which London has already reached.

But when I come to the clause which relates to the Borough Councils, then I am driven to ask what on earth is the Government scheme? Is the Government riding for a fall in this matter? Does it want the whole ridicule of London poured on its head over this preposterous attempt to amalgamate these two authorities? Is it afraid of the County Council and the Borough Councils, and is it trying to conciliate them both by giving a little to each. I know we are said to be afraid of the London School Board, and afraid of a directly-elected authority. I do not know why, I am sure. Take the Borough Councils. I have served upon them before they received their present designation, and I can remember the time when we used to sit and elect a member to sit on the Metropolitan Board of Works, and I say that immediately the Borough Councils have to select persons to sit on the education committees, I do not think there will be the slightest prospect of an expert being elected. They are ever ready, also, to combine against the London County Council; and I should like to know what the position would be if the experts, so called, combined with the Borough Councils against the London County Council; vote after vote, by sixty-one to thirty-six, would go from this committee to the County Council. The County Council would naturally back up its own members, and the result would be a deadlock, and the work of education would be brought to a standstill at once. I could have understood the Government giving the control to the London County Council, and allowing them to co-operate. I could have understood, and could have supported, a scheme placing London on the same footing as Birmingham, Macclesfield, and other places; but this scheme brings in a third element, and one I cannot possibly support. You are going to give the Borough Councils the choice of school sites, and the power to appoint teachers. Now one word about the choice of school sites. Two or three arguments have been advanced against the policy of the Government in that respect this afternoon, but I wish to submit one which has not been referred to, and that is, that if you have the central authority providing sites throughout the whole Metropolis, they may fix on a site just within the borders of one borough, which shall be destined to serve not only the children of that borough, but those outside that borough. That is the case in numberless instances. The best spot in the London School Board is that London is not marked out in boroughs, but in blocks, for the purposes of the London School Board, and accommodation has been provided for the children in those blocks. Will Chelsea be willing to provide for the children of Westminster or Fulham?

SIR WILLIAM ANSON here interjected an observation which did not reach the gallery.

MR. ERNEST GRAY: I have no doubt my hon. friend thinks so, or he would not have taken the responsibility for introducing the clause, but the simple proposition put before us is this—the Borough Councils will be responsible for providing these school sites. This is not a work which ought to be left to a local authority. It ought to be the duty of the central authority. I do not wish to say much at this stage—although I am rather hopeful that we shall not get another opportunity—with regard to the appointment of teachers, but I fear we are drifting into this state, that we shall have a large number of authorities for elementary education, and one authority for higher education. You are giving the borough councils the provision of sites and the appointment of teachers; you are on the threshold of appointing them separate authorities for elementary education, and if that is done the whole object of this Bill is destroyed. I quite agree that the details of management must be delegated to somebody, and that they must be delegated to local councils, but there might be management as we understood it in the Bill of last year, that does not include the appointment of teachers. In the case of neither the County Councils of any of the administrative counties, the Parish Councils, Urban District Councils, nor the non-county Borough Councils, is there a delegated right to appoint teachers locally. The regulations issued by the education authority in the Act of last year are regulations that require that even in voluntary schools the appointment of a teacher shall be notified before it takes effect, and I think the right to appoint a teacher should be in the hands of the central authority, the authority which provides the money and which will fix the standard of efficiency. That should be the work of the central authority; that is the main portion of the control, and as the main portion of school government, it will be their duty to see that the schools are properly staffed and maintained.

Under this scheme, as I understand, there will be a grave danger that the local Borough Councils will be constituted authorities for elementary education, if not in name, in fact, and if so, I cannot imagine anything worse for London or for the whole of the country. This problem is an extremely difficult problem, and one which will tax the energies of the best men and women that London can produce, and

I think that the authority having control of this work should be a directly-elected authority—co-opting experts if you will—but there should be a body of men who themselves will be refreshed by being periodically brought into touch with the ratepayers, and who will not allow the work to rest in the hands of officials. It has been said over and over again by some "if we had a directly-elected authority for London, we should never get a majority for our borough, the Progressives would always be in the majority." I think the conditions under which the elections would be fought under the new Act would be conditions not known under the School Board system. Under the old system there has been a duel going on between the School Board, and the voluntary system, and one of our greatest ideals in legislating this year—the great object of any Bill for London—will undoubtedly be putting the voluntary schools on the same financial footing as board schools; and the moment you have that the old conditions under which the School Board elections were fought in London will at once disappear and new life will spring into existence, and we who have fought the problem will unite in a constitutional authority. The body which is elected should be a body whose single and sole idea should be the advancement of the education of the Metropolis, of the Empire. A body which could not only make our schools efficient and maintain a high level in them, but should be able to raise the standard still higher. At this early stage I have no choice but to go into the Lobby against this Bill, and I shall do so on every possible occasion unless the Government will reconsider its position and amend this Bill as fully and as completely as the Bill of 1870 was amended. This, I know, is practically telling the Government to withdraw this Bill and to introduce another. It is almost vain to hope for that, judging by the scant attendance of Members present. But public opinion in London to-day is not in the same state as it was at Christmas last. The people have studied the subject during the last six months, and many who were formerly strong partisans of another policy have come to the conclusion that there must be a body of men devoting themselves to the purposes of education. This is a hybrid scheme which will give no satisfaction to any one; it has been lukewarmly received, even by the supporters of the Government; and I suggest that the Government should withdraw a measure which seems to me to be so ill-advised.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): As a London Member I listened with great gratification to the speech of the Leader of the Opposition in this debate. I think it is a very significant debate that we have had this afternoon. Nobody has asked for this Bill either in London or the country, and certainly, on the present occasion, we have not had a Member who has said a good word for it except the hon. Member for the Strand, who practically gave away the case of the Government because he said so far as he was concerned his opinion of the Bill was that the County Council must have a clear majority on the Education Committee. The speech of the hon. Member who has just sat down is very significant of the opinion held by those who are experts in educational matters. I am not so sanguine as he in the hope that this Bill will not go further. I think we shall have our work cut out to oppose it at every stage, and that it will be our duty to do so. Having said there must be one educational authority for London, the Government had three alternatives and they naturally chose the worst. Why has the hon. Gentleman given the *ad hoc* authority, which was the best, the go-by, and gone out of his way to get another authority altogether. For that course he had only two arguments, one was that the School Board were not in their management sufficiently decentralised, and another was that the electors of London did not take sufficient interest in their proceedings. It is quite certain that if the *ad hoc* authority was as it would be if it had been adopted as the authority placed on a different basis, there would not have been any difficulty in decentralising a considerable amount of its local management.

As regards the question of the want of interest taken by the electors in the London School Board, I deny that if any question is raised in which a matter of principle is involved that there is any want of interest in it; the electors then take considerable interest. On ordinary occasions the School Board jogs along without anything particularly affecting them, but the electors have great interest in the work that is being done. Then we must recollect, in the first place, that the area of representation is far too large, and in the second place that the cumulative vote prevents the electors taking the interest that they otherwise would, and we must also remember that these matters will be swept away if the School Board were reformed. The hon. Member reproaches the ratepayers and the electors for their want of interest in the School Board, and he now proposes to increase their interest in school management by destroying the only educational body to which they have an opportunity of electing members, and so prevents them taking any other interest in the future in educational affairs. One of the worst features of London citizenship is, I believe, the comparatively small interest that the citizens of London take in their own affairs, and what I regret so much in the actions of the present Government, is that in the questions of the London port, London water, and London education, the Government, largely prevent in the future the citizens of London taking that interest in their own concerns which we all desire to see. The hon. Member in his speech deprecated the term Water Board. What is known by the term Water Board policy, is a policy actuated by three objects, one of which is to take duties from the central body which ought to be given to them, and another of which is to put the central body in a minority on the new body; and thirdly, a policy of selection and delegation. The hon. Member is going to place the central authority in this case in a minority, and he is going to select a large number of members as on the Water Board. One of the objections that I feel to this body is that it is not only a Water Board but a fraudulent Water Board. When we were discussing the first Water Board, it was fairly and frankly stated that the London County Council, the central authority, was to be in a minority. But the hon. Gentleman told us this afternoon, that, in the first place, the County Council was going to be the central authority, and in the second place that it was going to have a clear majority on the body he proposed to create. Yet neither in regard to the question of authority, nor of majority, does it appear from the latter portion of the speech of the hon. Gentleman that the central authority is going to have real authority or a clear majority on the board. From his own showing, it is only going to have thirty-six out of a representation of ninety-seven, and to say that that is a clear majority is to say a thing which appears to me to be a contradiction of terms. The hon. Gentleman speaking just now showed that while the County Council would have the right of nominating a certain number of experts, even there, their opportunity of selection is much restricted because they are bound to select them from certain bodies and when selected the names have to go before the Education Department to be approved by them. It was not as if the County Council could appoint those whom they had in their own pockets, as it were, to represent their views. It was quite obvious, therefore, that in a very great number of cases the thirty-six members of the London County Council would be a very small minority of the members of the board. I was very glad to hear the hon. Member for the Strand Division and the hon. Member for Manchester strongly protest that if the County Council is to be the authority it must have a clear majority. But the hon. Gentleman just now said that the County Council is to be the educational authority. On paper, and according to the Bill, it will be the educational authority, but it is clear from the speech of the hon. Gentleman that the authority of the Council itself will be a very nominal one. Nominally subordinate to the Council will be a statutory committee. Is it not certain that that statutory body of ninety-six persons having been appointed it will be quite impossible for the County Council to revise the proceedings of that body? The County Council will nominally have the control of the purse, but the statutory committee will incur all the expenditure, and therefore make themselves practically the masters, and not the servants, of the County Council. The hon. Gentleman further told us that in regard to certain matters of great moment—the appointment of teachers and the selection of sites—the authority will be handed over entirely to the Borough Councils. But by having the power of the appointment and dismissal of teachers and the selection of sites, the Borough Councils will have considerably more power than those two matters would seem to imply. The appointment and dismissal of teachers practically means the complete control of the education in the local schools, carrying with it the staffing, the curriculum, and practically the whole management of the schools. By having to select the sites, they will be put in the position of judges as to the accommodation required, and the place where it should be provided.

*SIR WILLIAM ANSON: I must really ask the hon. Gentleman not to press this question of sites. When I say that the Borough Councils are to have the selection of sites, that cannot mean, or be understood to mean, that they are to determine what accommodation is required or where the site is to be. The education authority will say what accommodation is wanted and what area it must serve, and, this ring fence having been drawn round a particular area, the Borough Council will choose a site within that area.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: That is not what I understood from the speech of the hon. Gentleman, but if that is what is in the Bill, I am very glad to hear it, because the Borough Councils will then have less power with regard to a matter over which the central authority ought to have absolute control. The hon. Gentleman evidently anticipates considerable friction between the Borough Councils and the Statutory Committee, and that the Borough Councils will endeavour to obtain more authority than is proposed shall be given them, because he said that if a conflict arises as to what is management and what control, the question will practically be left to the Board of Education. I suppose the conclusion at which the board arrives will be carried out by our old friend "Mandamus." It passes the wit of man to define the difference between management and control, and if it is to be in the Bill the hon. Gentleman ought to have attempted to explain it. The fact is, that this proposal of the Government is another step in the direction of the ideal of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board who, when we were discussing the Water Board last session, said that by such a Board as that, was the right way to govern London. While I believe that the only way in which the education of London can be properly carried on is by a directly elected body — and I for one should protest against even the London County Council being the body, because their other work would be crippled—I have no animus or feeling against either the County Council or the Borough Councils. In their respective spheres I believe they do admirable work for London. But I object to this Bill because, while it destroys the School Board, it will, in my opinion, largely cripple the utility of the London County Council itself, and create friction between the Borough Councils and the central body. I am glad to think that when we get into Committee there will be no question of principle involved, and I hope the Government will be willing, as far as possible, to leave the matters in dispute to the decision of the House itself. The only principle laid down by the hon. Gentleman is the co-ordination of authorities, and on that we are all agreed. There is no question of carrying the Act of last year to its logical conclusion in London, because London is on a totally different basis from the rest of the country; the London County Council differs from the other County Councils, and the Borough Councils are not the same as the county boroughs. Under these circumstances I hope the Government will be able to meet, not only the views of hon. Members on this side of the House, but also the views expressed so emphatically by hon. Gentlemen opposite. Unless they do so, I trust the Bill will not pass, because I believe it is the worst Education Bill ever introduced by any Government, and that, if passed, it will do a great deal to injure and retard education in London.

*SIR WILLIAM ANSON who was indistinctly heard, was understood to say: I think there has been some misapprehension as to certain parts of the Bill. Among other things, I think I have reason to complain of the construction placed by the Leader of the Opposition on my view as to the directly elected authority. The right hon. Gentleman himself seemed to confuse a directly elected authority solely for education purposes, or an authority elected *ad hoc*, and a directly-elected authority for general municipal purposes, which undertakes education among its other cares. It is to such a directly-elected authority—an authority chosen by the people to transact their general municipal affairs—that I wish to entrust education along with their other work. Great difference of opinion has been expressed as to the capacity of the London County Council. The hon. Member for North Camberwell thinks we are asking the London County Council to undertake more than they can do, while other hon. Members have said that the body is quite capable of doing this work if it is not interfered with by the presence of borough members on the Committee. I think we may assume, therefore, that it is very much open to question whether the London County Council is not fully capable of doing this work if it has a free hand. But the question has been raised whether it is the authority. It is undoubtedly the fact that we propose to make the London County Council the authority. It has sole control of the business and policy; it can do anything it likes, or delegate any of its powers, except its financial power, to this Committee. Surely we are not hampering the County Council by providing this advisory committee on which we have endeavoured to provide that all educational interests in London should be represented. We cannot be accused of creating a Water Board in disguise when we constitute a committee for the assistance of the County Council. I think hon. Members have been somewhat rash in criticising in detail clauses which they have not yet seen. We desire to provide that the management of the school—which must be provided for somehow or other, and was provided for under the Act of 1870—shall be really a measure of decentralisation, subject to the financial control and directing power of the central authority. The central authority can say what is to be the staff of every school, how many teachers there are to be, what is to be the amount of their salaries, what are to be their qualifications, what accommodation is required, and the area it must serve. The anxiety which has been expressed as to the appointment and dismissal of teachers and the selection of sites will really be found to be unfounded when the Clauses are seen in print.

Then it has been said that friction will be created between the County Council and the Borough Councils. I have observed throughout the debates on education that wherever persons not absolutely belonging to the same institution were asked to combine with the work of education, it has been supposed that friction would necessarily arise. I cannot believe that the interests of the Borough Councils and the London County Council, when they are both dealing with the education of the Metropolis, will be found to be so divergent that they will always be in conflict. All that it really comes to is, that when the border ine between management and control is so fine that a question arises, which need not be a contentious question, between the Borough Council and the local education authority, the Board of Education, as arbitrators, step in and say whether it is a matter on which the Borough Council is entitled to act. In the same way we provide that there should be no deficiency of good management, because if the Borough Council fails in its duty the local authority can demand from the Board of Education that it shall be allowed to step in. If hon. Members who have been most severe in their criticisms of a Bill which they have not read will be so good as to read the measure, which I hope will shortly be in their hands, I think they will find that the policy of the Bill of last session has been put into effect in this measure, and that the London County Council is the authority, just as the County Councils all over the country are the authority in their respective areas. There will be some measure of decentralisation as regards management, but the directing power of the central authority will be felt in education all over London. The central authority will, I believe, work harmoniously with the Borough Councils, whom we are asking to take over some of the details of the administration of education in London.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs): I am nota London Member, but I don ot think I need to apologise for taking part in this debate. I believe that the agitation against this Bill will form part of a great national agitation which will result in the Education Acts being amended by one Bill which will cover the whole country. There are one or two questions which have not been elucidated by the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down in the course of his second speech which constitute a rather remarkable omission in his explanation of this Bill. The first thing that he skimmed over as a matter of no consequence is the management of voluntary schools.

*SIR WILLIAM ANSON: I expressly stated that the managers of voluntary schools would be precisely in the same position in regard to the local authority under this Bill as they are under the Act of 1892.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Does that mean that four will be appointed by the denominational trustees and two by whom? Will it be by the County Council or the Borough Council?

*SIR WILLIAM ANSON: I must refer the hon. Member to Clause 7 of the Act of 1902.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: But the Bill of 1902 is not extended in several important particulars, and what I want to know is whether it is extended in this particular? Does the local education authority appoint two managers, or is it left to the Borough Council?

*SIR WILLIAM ANSON: I must again refer the hon. Member to the Act.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I want to know who appoints the two managers who represent the ratepayers. Are they appointed by the Borough Council or by the Education Committee?

*SIR WILLIAM ANSON: The County Council as the greater authority and the minor local authority will each appoint a manager, and there will be four foundation managers.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: That is not the Act of 1902. The hon. Member not only does not know what is in the present Bill but he has forgotten the Bill of last year. I daresay that the approval of hon. Gentlemen and others is largely based upon the fact that they have forgotten a great deal of the provisions of last year's Bill. Here is the first departure from that Bill. The County Council, through its Committee, only appoints one, and the second is appointed by the Borough Council, while the remaining four are appointed by the trustees. The second point I want to put to somebody, and as the Secretary to the Board of Education has left his seat perhaps the President of the Local Government Board will attend to it. The right hon. Gentleman need not look so detached, because I believe that he has had far more to do with this Bill than many hon. Members think. I should like, while the Secretary to the Board of Education is getting some information about the Bill, to ask about rather a fundamental thing which seems to have been overlooked. I want to know if this Committee is exactly in the same position as the Committee of the County Council in the country. Is it purely a Committee of the County Council or is it a statutory body?

SIR JOHN GORST: No.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: But the right hon. Gentleman is not responsible now. The Secretary to the Board of Education named a number of authorities who will be represented on this Committee. Have they got an absolute right of nomination, or is it left to the County Council to appoint or not?

*SIR WILLIAM ANSON: Yes, the County Council have the absolute right of appointment. In order to account for the large number of twenty-five I instanced a number of bodies whom it might be thought proper to invite to send persons to act on the Committee.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: What I understand is that the County Council is in the same position as the bodies of last year with an exception which I shall point out. The County Council need not give representation to any of these bodies if it thinks it desirable not to do so. If it does not then they are not in the same position as the County Councils in last year's Bill. The hon. Gentleman in explaining his Bill named the City Guilds, the Voluntary Associations, the London University, and Charitable Associations. Is that simply his private opinion as to the bodies that ought to be represented, or is it a direction in the Bill? I think that is fundamental.

*Sir WILLIAM ANSON: I used them by way of illustration, and nothing more.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: That is satisfactory, so far. Now we have got some idea of what sort of a Bill this is. There is nobody who is absolutely favourable to the Bill except one person, and he is the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge, who has approved of the Bill absolutely.

Sir JOHN GORST: No, I approved of the principle.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: Then the one solitary supporter of the Government has gone, and there is "none so poor to do him reverence." The right hon. Gentleman said that this was a complete democratic measure, and the Prime Minister punctuated his speech with cheers of relief. The right hon. Gentleman said it was a democratic measure, but it was a democracy which could not be trusted to choose its own representatives, and you must have all sorts of safeguards, and with all these provisions you may trust them perhaps to a certain extent. It is very interesting to get the idea of the representatives of the great democratic constituencies of Oxford and Cambridge Universities as to what a complete democratic measure is. First of all you have got the County Council, which is the greatest local authority, I think, in the world. To what extent can you trust this great local authority? First of all you cannot trust it to appoint its own Committee absolutely, and there are directions as to how it shall appoint a Committee. It can only appoint altogether something like one-third of the Committee. The County Council appoints twenty-five on the suggestion of some other bodies. In this respect, therefore, it does not get the same power as the County Council of Rutland. Rutland you can trust, because it has shown how it can be trusted by putting representatives of voluntary schools on its body. That is the test of the trustworthiness of this democracy. The test seems to be the extent to which they will trust education to voluntary schools and to the clergy. The London County Council may not do this, and therefore it cannot be trusted. Rutland is trustworthy, but London is not. There is another check upon the London County Council, and that is setting up another democratic authority and at the same time setting up a sort of civil war between the local authorities and the County Council. This is quite a new principle, and I defy the hon. Member, with all his learning, to quote a precedent. In order to check one authority elected by the ratepayers you set up a rival authority, and then you say. If you cannot agree we will call in the Board of Education, which is another great democratic institution. How is it to be worked? All the real power is vested in the Borough Councils, because, after all, when you control a business the most important thing is the appointment of the staff. The management, from the appointment of a staff to the repairing of a pane of glass, is to be left to the Borough Council, and the real management and control is left to it. In regard to the selection of sites a kind of circle is to be drawn, but by whom and how I do not know. Then the selection of the site is to be left to the Borough Councils, and if there is a dispute the Board of Education comes in to decide. The Secretary to the Board of Education said the Bill would excite great local interest about education. Undoubtedly the excitement will really be great over disputes about sites between these three great democratic bodies. I do not know what proportion the voluntary schools bear to the other schools in London, but there are a considerable number of those schools. Again there is a further experiment in this "great democratic measure," and that is in regard to voluntary school managers. The control is practically entirely in the hands of the denominationalists, and this is the idea of the Government of a "great democratic measure." The Secretary to the Board of Education says you must have experts, for after all the democracy will not select men because of their educational knowledge. You cannot trust popular election, and you say, therefore, that the School Boards would not elect a man for educational efficiency, and that you must get the Borough Councils to do it. A School Board exists for no other purpose than education, and you say that the electors will not elect a man to that board because he understands education, but that when you have an election about main drains you will get a man who knows the technology of education. That is a very extraordinary doctrine which the hon. Gentleman has developed. The fact is the Bill is not made to work, and it will simply produce conflict. I thought it was utterly impossible to get a worse Bill than that of last year, but I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on the ingenuity with which he has succeeded in that great task. The Bill of last year did give a certain amount of control to the County Council, but here you only have a divided authority between the County Council, which provides the money, the Borough Council which spends, and the Board of Education which is to decide in cases of dispute. This is what is called popular control of education. It is a perfectly ludicrous Bill. The hon. Member says it is to get rid of the religious controversy; but does he think he will get rid of that controversy by Bills of this character? This is really one of the most amusing explanations of the Bill. You will introduce religious controversy in departments where it has never been before. At the Borough Council elections in November the contests will be purely and simply a religious controversy.

SIR FREDERICK BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham): No, no. [Laughter.]

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The hon. Baronet the Member for Peckham laughs. He had better look up his religious and theological repertoire, because I can assure him that he will have to turn on a good many tunes of that description at the next election. At any rate, I am perfectly certain that at the borough elections in November the contest will be entirely on this ground, and roads and drains and all important questions of that character will be subordinated entirely to these sacerdotal and theological questions. That is a bad thing. The Prime Minister knows it. You cannot keep it out of Imperial elections. You cannot even keep it out of the East Manchester Conservative Association. That body is discussing the Prime Minister's theological views and condemning them. What is the good of talking about things of that sort? The Secretary to the Board of Education knows perfectly well that the theological controversy is at the bottom of this whole Bill. If it had not been for that the Bill would never have come into existence. The Cockerton judgment was inspired by theology. [AN HON. MEMBER: Oh, oh!] Of course it was. The noble Lord the Member for Greenwich, for some abstruse reason, is not present to-day. Perhaps he is not satisfied with the "Kenyon-Slaneyism" of the Bill, which, by the way, is a point that the Secretary to the Board of Education has left untouched. The hon. Member has left out all the interesting parts of the Bill. He has gone into minute questions of organisation, but the real controversy, what the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University calls the principle of the Bill, has been ignored. It has, I think, been ignored with great skill by the hon. Member representing the Board of Education, but we cannot keep these things out. I agree with the hon. Member for Battersea that it is not a question altogether of *ad hoc* or of the County Council. I am not a great believer in *ad hoc* authority. It is very difficult to dogmatise on the question of that authority. In America they have tried the *ad hoc* authority, and they are not satisfied with it, and they are trying something else. What is really at the bottom of the whole business is this question of sectarianism. That is why the Borough Councils are introduced, and everybody knows that very well. The Government cannot trust the County Council at the present moment, but they can trust the Borough Councils because of their political complexion. The hon. Gentleman in explaining the Bill said that this was not a Water Board; it was not a twin ship to the Water Board. I think it is a twin screw which is to propel the same great ship or machine of monopoly.

It is intended to secure the monopoly of clerical domination over the schools. I do not agree with my hon. friend the Member for Poplar that these things ought to be discussed in Committee. I hope we shall never meet this Bill in Committee at all. I hope it will never go so far after the very sweeping and severe criticism it received from the hon. Member for West Ham, who is an authority on the question of education. I really do not see how a Bill which has been condemned by practically every speaker—how any majority of the House of Commons that has any self-respect can persevere with it. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury ought to reconsider it, and give us another try. I hope before the Bill is absolutely printed he will be able to reconsider it, and that we will hear no more of this perfectly grotesque and silly measure.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping): I hope the Secretary to the Board of Education will not be disturbed by the rhetorical fireworks of my hon. friend the Member for Carnarvon. My hon. friend is bound by his own past history to condemn the Bill, and it is equally certain that any Bill of any description brought in on this side of the House would be assailed in similarly unmeasured terms by right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Opposition Bench. Hon. Members opposite have made a great deal of the fact that every one who had spoken on this side of the House, with the exception of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Cambridge University, had condemned the educational measure proposed by the Government. As regards that, I would say that I do not believe that hon. Members have thoroughly understood the Bill. The only information they have upon it was gathered from the speech of the Secretary to the Board of Education. I do not see any reason at all why Members on this side of the House should not be satisfied with the measure which has been brought forward by the Government. As to the question in regard to the power of choosing sites, that is a very small matter, because these sites are already nearly dealt with. Then we come to the question that the County Council have already too much to do. After all, after the first three or five years, it will become a matter of routine, and very little work will be placed on the County Council. Personally, however, I think the County Council ought to have a larger majority on the Statutory Education Committee than the Bill proposes, and in order to give that majority the borough councillors might be cut out altogether. I think when the House comes to see the Bill it will be found that it is not so destructive of education in London as they imagine.

*MR. CORRIE GRANT (Warwickshire, Rugby): I will not detain the House for more than a few minutes in criticising the measure. I think we all agree with the hon. Gentleman that it is very desirable that we should see the Bill before entering on detailed criticism. We hope the measure as printed will contain the final proposals of the Government; that we are not going to have endowment clauses sprung upon us after the measure has been guillotined, and provisions for the benefit of sectarian establishments foisted into a measure at the last moment. I think there is only one thing on which this House will be agreed in regard to this Bill. I think the whole House is agreed in having the very greatest feeling for the hon. Baronet in the task which has been imposed upon him this afternoon. I do not think the oldest Member can recall an occasion in which a Government measure has been introduced from the Front Bench without a single cheer or sign of approval from the Members behind. Perhaps that is partly due to the fact that the hon. Baronet has had no experience whatever of elementary education. His experience has been confined to another class of education altogether, and probably he would have discharged the task much better, and certainly the Bill would have been much better, if he had had any experience of that popular education and popular election which he condemned in his speech. If he had the experience of a single popular School Board meeting in London, he would have formed a much higher opinion of the effect of popular election on School Board members, and he would have had a much higher opinion of the men who have to administer education in London. The hon. Baronet has apparently altogether overlooked how very badly his scheme of allowing Borough Councils to appoint teachers will work in the interests of the children themselves. One of the most difficult and onerous tasks imposed on the London School Board is the selection of teachers. The best men come to the front only after years of training, after many examinations and tests by inspectors. The Board in making these appointments always has to fight against local influences which are brought to bear on behalf of individual teachers. The vital fault which lies at the back of the hon. Baronet's scheme is that he wants to secure the admission of men and women who are too indolent or too fastidious to stand a popular election and want to come in by a side wind and obtain control of the work. We have an admission from the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken of another evil of the Bill when he said he preferred to give the London County Council a bigger majority. It is significant that on the First Reading of the Bill criticisms from the hon. Members for Essex and West Ham should go to the root of the Bill.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 159; Noes, 77. (Division List No. 60.)

AYES.

Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Aird, Sir John
Allhusen, Aug. Henry Eden
Allsopp, Hon. George
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Arrol, Sir William
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Bailey, James (*Walworth*)
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Baird, John George Alexander
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (*Manch'r*
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (*Leeds*
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bhownaggree, Sir M. M.
Bignold, Arthur
Bill, Charles
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Bond, Edward
Boulnois, Edmund
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Bull, William James
Butcher, John George
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Cavendish, V. C. W. (*Derbyshire*
Cecil, Evelyn (*Aston Manor*)
Chamberlain, Rt Hon J (*Birm*
Chamberlain, RtHnJA. (*Worc.*
Chapman, Edward
Charrington, Spencer
Clive, Captain Percy A.
Cochrane, Hon. Thos H. A. E.
Cohen, Benjamin Louis
Collings, Right Hon. Jesse
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Cranborne, Viscount
Crossley, Sir Savile
Cust, Henry John C.
Dalkeith, Earl of
Davenport, William Bromley
Denny, Colonel
Dickson, Charles Scott
Duke, Henry Edward
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Dyke, Rt. Hn. Sir William Hart
Faber, George Denison (*York*)
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
Fergusson, Rt Hn. Sir J. (*Man'r*
Finch, Rt. Hon. George H.
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
FitzGerald, Sir Robt. Penrose
Fitzroy, Hon. Edw. Algernon
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Flower, Ernest
Forster, Henry William
Foster, P. S. (*Warwick, S.W.*
Galloway, William Johnson
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, HnA.G.H (*City of Lond*
Gibbs, Hn. Vicary (*St. Albans*
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.
Gordon, HnJE. (*Elgin & Nairn*
Gorst, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Eldon
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Greene, Hy. D. (*Shrewsbury*)
Hain, Edward
Hall, Edward Marshall
HamiltonRtHnLordG (*Midd'x*
Hamilton, Marq. of (*Londondy*
Hanbury, Rt. Hn. Robt. Wm.
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Hatch, Ernest Frederick G.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heath, Arthur H. (*Hanley*)
Heath, James (*Staffs., N.W.*)
Henderson, Sir Alexander
Hope, J. F. (*Sheffield, Brightside*
Horner, Frederick William
Houston, Robert Paterson
Howard, J. (*Midd., Tott'ham*
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Jameson, Major J. Eustace
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (*Salop*
Keswick, William
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Law, Andrew Bonar (*Glasgow*)
Lawson, John Grant
Lee, A. H. (*Hants, Fareham*)
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Leveson-Gower, Fredk. N. S
Lockie, John
Lockwood, Lieut.-Col. A. R.
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (*Bristol, S.*
Lowe, Francis William
Loyd, Archie Kirkman
Lucas, Col. Francis (*Lowestoft*
Lundon, W.
Macdona, John Cumming
MacVeagh, Jeremiah
M'Arthur, Charles (*Liverpool*)
M'Iver, Sir Lewis (*Edinburgh W*
M'Killop, Jas. (*Stirlingshire*)
Majendie, James A. H.
Maple, Sir John Blundell
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Maxwell, RtHnSirHE. (*Wigt'n*
Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Montagu, G. (*Huntingdon*)
Montagu, Hon. J. Scott (*Hants.*)
Morrison, James Archibald
Morton, Arthur H. Aylmer
Mount, William Arthur
Murray, RtHnA. Graham (*Bute*
Nicholson, William Graham
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Nolan, Joseph (*Louth, S.*)
O'Malley, William
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Peel, Hn. Wm. R. Wellesley
Percy, Earl
Pierpoint, Robert
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Pretyman, Ernest George
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Redmond, William (*Clare*)
Remnant, Jas. Farquharson
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomson
Robertson, H. (*Hackney*)
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye
Round, Rt. Hon. James
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (*Marylebone, W.*)
Seely, Chas. Hilton (*Lincoln*)
Seely, MajJEB. (*Isle of Wight*)
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (*Renfrew*)
Smith, Jas. Parker (*Lanarks.*)
Smith, Hn. W. F. D. (*Strand*)
Spencer, Sir E. (*W. Bromwich*)
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Jn. M.
Stroyan, John
Sturt, Hn. Humphry Napier
Talbot, Lord E. (*Chichester*)
Thornton, Percy M.

Mr. Corrie Grant.

Tomlinson, Sir Wm. E. M.
Tritton, Charles Ernest
Valentia, Viscount
Walrond, Rt. Hon. Sir W. H.
Welby, Lt.-Col. A.C.E. (*Taunton*
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (*Bath*
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Anstruther.

NOES.

Allen, Chas. P. (*Glos., Stroud*)
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hon. Herbt. Hy.
Bell, Richard
Bolton, Thomas Dolling
Brigg, John
Broadhurst, Henry
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, John
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Caldwell, James
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H
Causton, Richard Knight
Crooks, William
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Alfred (*Carmarthen*)
Davies, M. Vaughan (*Cardign*
Dewar, John A. (*Inverness-sh.*)
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Douglas, Charles M. (*Lanark*)
Duncan, J. Hastings
Elibank, Master of
Emmott, Alfred
Evans, Saml. T. (*Glamorgan*)
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (*Leith*
Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
Foster, Sir Michl. (*Lond. Univ*
Foster, Sir Walter (*Derby Co.*
Furness, Sir Christopher
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Grant, Corrie
Gray, Ernest (*West Ham*)
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm.
Harwood, George
Hayne, Rt. Hn. Charles Seale-
Hayter, Rt Hon Sir Arthur D.
Holland, Sir William Henry
Jacoby, James Alfred
Jones, D. Brynmor (*Swansea*
Jones, Wm. (*Carnarvonshire*)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leng, Sir John
Levy, Maurice
Logan, John William
Lough, Thomas
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Morley, Rt. Hn. John (*Montrose*
Norman, Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Paulton, James Mellor
Rea, Russell
Reckitt, Harold James
Rickett, J. Compton
Rigg, Richard
Roberts, John Bryn (*Eifion*)
Roberts, John H. (*Denbighs.*)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rose, Charles Day
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbt. L. (*Cleveland*)
Sandys, Lt.-Col. Thos. Myles
Schwann, Charles E.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles E. (*Stafford*)
Shaw, Thomas (*Hawick, B.*)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, John (*Forfarshire*)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Spencer, Rt. Hn C. B. (*Northants*
Thomson, F. W. (*York, W. R.*)
Wallace, Robert
Wason, E. (*Clackmannan*)
Wason, J. Cathcart (*Orkney*)
Weir, James Galloway
Whiteley, G. (*York, W. R.*)
Whitley, J. H. (*Halifax*)
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Herbert Gladstone and Mr. William M'Arthur.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Sir William Anson, Mr. Walter Long, and Mr. Attorney-General.

LONDON EDUCATION BILL.

"To extend and adapt the Education Act, 1902, to London," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday 21st April, and to be printed. [Bill 154.]

EVENING SITTING.

NATIONAL OPERA.

MR. GALLOWAY (Manchester, S. W.) said in rising to move the Motion standing in his name he owed some apology to the House for bringing forward this proposal at such an inconvenient time, when the nearness of the holidays precluded not only many of those who supported his views, but also many of those who opposed them, from taking part in the debate. The Motion had been advisedly drawn in a vague form, not only in order to conform with the rules of the House, which precluded private Members from bringing forward Motions which put a charge on public funds, but also because in a year when the national expenditure had reached unprecedented bounds it was not likely that the Government would indulge in a new departure, which some regarded rather as a luxury than a necessity. He believed whatever was done for the other arts ought certainly to be done for the art of music. He was aware that this was not a popular subject, but it was one which he ventured to think was nearly connected with the welfare of the nation and one which the House should seriously consider. This was, he believed, the first occasion on which the House had been asked to consider this question in particular. There had been several discussions on the general question of art—on art in all its branches, but no discussion on the particular question of music.

From time immemorial music had formed an integral part of the national life of nations. In Egyptian history there was no doubt music was an important feature of the State ceremonial of that era, and it had been a great feature of religion. In all times music had formed a portion of religious services. He had no desire to traverse the whole history of music, but it had existed as an integral feature of the life of all nations at all times. In the Middle Ages, there were mystery plays, which combined for the first time the art of music and the drama. Nor was this country left out, although there was no encouragement from the Government, for musical plays were performed at Coventry, Chester, and elsewhere. Then the works of Shakespeare showed that that great man was not oblivious to the value and importance of music. It was shown, for instance, in *The Tempest* and *As You Like It*, and in perhaps the best known of all the clown's songs in *Twelfth Night*

> "Come away, come away, death
> And in sad cypress let me be laid."

In modern times, perhaps the best exponent of musical knowledge and technique was Wagner, and it was well known that that great man accomplished his work under the ægis of an enlightened patron.

It had been said with truth that had Purcell lived longer, and had Handel not visited this country, the operatic history of England would have been different. The fact remained that this country was lamentably behind all other nations in the encouragement which was given to one of the greatest of the Arts. They could not, however much they might try, separate music from the great Arts. In poetry, painting, literature, sculpture and architecture there would be found a trace of the art of music. Some of the finest paintings that the world had ever seen had been produced by the knowledge of music in the painter's mind. In some of the finest architecture in the world there was a trace of music to be found. The conclusion to which he wished to direct attention was that music was essentially one of the greatest of the Fine Arts.

The Government voted £4,000 a year to science; and, while he did not begrudge that amount, and did not suggest it was not well spent, he asked what had been done for music, not alone in the interests of those who heard it, but in the interests of those who artistically produced it? There were the British Museum, the National Gallery, the Kensington School of Art, and other institutions all under the patronage of the Government. The knowledge of literature was provided throughout the country by great free libraries. He did not object to free libraries. Far be it from him to be guilty of any such stupidity; because free libraries were of almost incalculable good to the great masses of the people. But he was entitled to point to the encouragement which had been given to literature and other arts, while no encouragement was being given to the lover of music. The Government placed a certain amount of money, he thought quite rightly, at the discretion of the First Lord of the Treasury for the relief of literary persons who were unable to support themselves. That was a most beneficent and wise provision. But while that was done for literature, nothing was done for music. It was quite true that they had made great strides during the last few years in this particular matter. He had not unlimited admiration for the London County Council and all their works; but, at all events, they were the pioneers of music for the people of London, and their action had affected other local authorities throughout the country. Last year the London County Council spent over £12,000 in 1,177 performances in sixty-five parks and gardens during the summer months. Besides their own band of 128 members, they had fifty-three other bands, and reckoning 1,000 persons at each performance, that meant that over 1,100,000 persons heard the music which was provided.

To those who argued that music was a luxury for the rich, he would put it to the House that many of the 1,100,000 people who heard the music might have been occupied in a much worse way had the music not been provided. All the great municipalities had been doing something in the same direction, and Glasgow, Leeds, and his native city of Manchester, had been providing concerts not only in the summer, but also in the winter months. It was an extraordinary fact that these local authorities should have been leading the way while the Government were doing nothing for the encouragement of the art. Who would deny that if they could get the people to attend concerts provided by the London County Council and other great municipalities, great benefit would be conferred on the community; and who would deny that if they were able to go further, as the Motion suggested, the people would gradually be educated, as they were in Continental cities, to appreciate the highest form of all music—the combination of music and the drama known as opera. It might be said that people always congregated where a band was, because it made noise. Even if that were true, which he did not admit, surely it was better that they should congregate in a healthy spot rather than congregate, as was frequently the case, in public houses. In every class of the community there was some knowledge of, and some desire for music; and if the Government would only step forward and do what he ventured to think was their duty, and what every nation on the Continent did, it would not be long before they found a much greater improvement in the people than they could hope for from any ordinary Act of Parliament.

Every Sunday afternoon the Queen's Hall was packed, not with fashionable London, but with a very different class, who were present not because they merely wished to hear music, but because they desired to learn the very best in music. The financial success of what were known as musical festivals was an evidence of the increasing love of the people for the art Many of them remembered when musical festivals were of very rare occurrence; now some of the finest music was heard at them. How much finer that music would be if it were carried through to its logical conclusion, namely opera. It was extraordinary that this country should provide a certain amount—small, it was true—of musical education for the people in musical academies and colleges, and yet take no care of what became of the pupils who had been educated in these institutions. It was not so on the Continent. On the Continent people were taught music, and were also given an opportunity of developing their knowledge and of putting that knowledge to practical use. Why should that not be so in this country? This country looked upon music more from the commercial point of view than any other. Commercialism in art was the ruin of all art. A man who was not able to produce the best in him because it did not pay, because it was not popular, because he could not sell his wares, so to speak, at a price remunerative to him, never produced the best that was in him, and if that sort of thing in general was true, it was true of music in particular.

Covent Garden opera could not claim to exist from an artistic point of view. The Covent Garden productions were indeed very far from being artistic; but they had got so used to them now that they looked upon them as part and parcel of the season. People familiar with the subject knew that in the first performance there is a snowstorm. It begins on the first night, and goes steadily through all the operas until the end of the operatic season. Whatever else Covent Garden might claim to be, it cannot claim to be a national opera in the artistic sense. Far be it from him to blame the syndicate which ran Covent Garden. They might claim to exist from an artistic point of view; but if they did not make money they would soon close their doors. In every capital in the world, and in several small towns on the Continent, it was possible to hear a decent opera at a price everyone could afford. Covent Garden could not be regarded as a national opera; yet it could not be denied that the fault was mainly due to the lack of encouragement by the Government. It was due in a smaller degree also to another form of commercialism. How was it possible for an artist to make any headway in his profession if he had to sell himself to an agent for a term of years, who made him execute, not what was artistic, but what was popular? What chance had such a man of providing against his old age? He had to sell his musical soul to his agent, and brought about his own financial ruin in the bargain.

It might be asked how the remedy he suggested would cure all that. In the first place, if they were going to do anything, the Government must have knowledge on the subject. The Government would do well to secure enlightenment by means of inquiry, and he had some hope that they would sooner or later go to this extent, for they had consented to give a Return from all our consular bodies showing in what way music and the opera were subsidised in the various countries. He recognised that the Government, before they did anything, had a right to see what those returns brought forth. If anything was to be done he hoped the Government would consider whether it should be by way of encouraging local authorities, or whether it should be by way of Imperial grant. The Government might do well to consider whether the time had not arrived when they could frame a plan whereby one of the noblest of the Arts might be encouraged.

It would be absurd to leave out of the curriculum Scotch, or Irish, or Welsh music, if they were to have a system of national music. All he hoped for that evening was to arouse interest and discussion on this question; and if he succeeded in that he was satisfied. At present, his proposal might appear unpopular, but it often happened that unpopularity turned into popularity. He owed no apology to the House for bringing forward the question, because, after all, the House existed for the purpose of effecting the greatest good of the greatest number, and if by encouraging art they could do something to improve the social conditions of the people, and to remove evils which they all deplored, surely they could not regard the time spent in considering the subject wasted. He hoped his hon. friend who represented the Government would be able to give him some encouragement in his efforts on behalf of the great cause to which he was devoted, and which he held so dear.

*MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said as one of the many millions of his countrymen who were lovers of music, he gladly seconded the Motion. His hon. friend opened his speech with a remark which was of historical character, namely, that that was the first occasion on which a sitting of the House of Commons had been devoted to music. Although the House was practically empty, it was an encouragement to all who believed in the educational advantages of music to know that Parliament had given even an hour to consider the claims of music. It was a most lamentable fact that every artist who desired to achieve success in music had to go abroad to be properly trained ; and unfortunately the British public had by long usage been led to believe that no artist could be regarded as pre-eminent unless he bore, or had assumed, a foreign name. The musical profession had too long been regarded as a profession for ne'er-do-wells. An Orangeman would regard the entry of his son or daughter into the musical profession in the same light as if they became Roman Catholics. Worse than the social aspect was the fact that success in the musical profession depended on what he might call the vulgarity of social patronage, and upon the skill of the usurer who made the skill of the artist his means of usury. Again, many struggling artists had to pay heavily in order to get a hearing ; and, further, there was a state of things which enabled foreign musicians to form a close ring in England, so strong that they were able to boycott native artists.

Another reason for the condition of music in this country was that the musical schools throughout the country did not attract teachers of European eminence. Nevertheless, there was a deep musical sentiment among the people. He did not see many hon. Members present who were educated at Eton, but all who were at Eton would appreciate the great inspiration which lay in the Eton Boating Song, and it had played a very important part in their lives. Then there was a song which often aroused patriotism and showed a deep musical sense on the part of those who joined in it, "Give me my Stable Jacket." In his own country of Scotland "Auld Lang Syne" was produced. He thought no one would accuse the Scottish nation of being unmusical, and of not being susceptible to the great educational and human side of music.

During the last twenty years he had the privilege of being concerned in organising many great concerts, not of the light and airy kind, but at which the best, and even the heaviest kind of music was heard. The audiences were drawn mainly from the working classes, and, although they had not had an opportunity of listening to such music before, it produced such an impression on them as to lead them to give up their spare time to music rather than a public house. How was it therefore, that the Government did not propose the establishment of a permanent institution where music could be recognised? How was it that opera in London was merely an exhibition of snobbery, or the plaything of the plutocracy? At Covent Garden they had operas rendered by the greatest singers, yet the performances were unmusical and inartistic. It was because they were not organised on a true basis of national character.

Italian theatres had been assisted rather than supported by municipalities, and semi-public associations had acted on the principle that help given to the opera was assistance rendered for the public good. The experience of Germany was the same; but in all these cases the opera had been assisted by subventions or supported by the Civil List or the municipality. The result had been that good opera had been brought within the reach of all classes. He sincerely hoped the Government would accept the Motion which, under somewhat difficult circumstances, he had seconded.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this House, with a view to directing the musical taste of the people into proper channels, it is desirable that National Opera Houses under public control should be established in the principal cities of the United Kingdom."—(*Mr. Galloway.*)

*Sir WILLIAM ANSON said that this was a subject upon which it was difficult for the Government to make any statement which would be satisfactory to hon. Members. The subvention of national opera in foreign countries was at this moment the subject of inquiry, and a Return was being prepared. When that Return was made, and the Government was in full possession of the action of other Governments in this direction, then it might be possible to give full and fair consideration to the questions which had been raised. He hoped his hon. friends would be satisfied with the assurance that the Government were alive to the importance of the question. Nothing could be done until the Return had been made; but he was not justified in holding out any definite promise that public money would be forthcoming after that Return had been received. Nevertheless the importance of the matter was recognised.

Mr. GALLOWAY: I beg to ask the leave of the House to withdraw the Motion.

Major JAMESON (Clare, W.) rose to continue the discussion.

Notice taken that forty Members were not present; House counted, and forty Members not being present,

The House was adjourned at two minutes past Ten of the Clock till To-morrow.

Adjourned at two minutes after Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 8th April, 1903.

The House met at Two of the Clock.

UNOPPOSED PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Nantwich Urban District Council Bill [Lords]; read a second time, and committed.

Plymouth and Stonehouse Gas Bill [Lords]; Queensland Investment and Land Mortgage Bill [Lords]; Western Trust Bill [Lords]; read a second time, and committed.

PRIVATE BILLS, ETC.

Ordered, That Standing Orders 39, 129, and 230 be suspended, and that the time for depositing Petitions and Memorials against Private Bills, or against any Bill to confirm any Provisional Order or Provisional Certificate, and for depositing duplicates of any Documents relating to any Bill to confirm any Provisional Order or Provisional Certificate, also for depositing at the Private Bill Office all Documents relating to any Order under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, be extended to the first day on which the House shall sit after the Recess.—(*The Deputy Chairman.*)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 3).

Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board for Ireland relating to the counties of Dublin and Wexford, the urban districts of Blackrock, Dalkey, Killiney and Ballybrack, Kingstown, Pembroke, Rathmines and Rathgar and Wexford, and the town of Keady, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland and Mr. Wyndham.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 4).

Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board for Ireland relating to Belfast (Rural), and Londonderry, and the Rathdrum and Wicklow Joint Burial Board District, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland and Mr. Wyndham.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 4).

Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Camborne, Heston and Isleworth, Mountain Ash, New Windsor, Southport, Stratford-upon-Avon, Tunbridge Wells, and Whitley and Monkseaton, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Grant Lawson and Mr. Walter Long.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 3) BILL.

"To confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board for Ireland relating to the counties of Dublin and Wexford, the urban districts of Blackrock, Dalkey, Killiney and Ballybrack, Kingstown, Pembroke, Rathmines and Rathgar and Wexford, and the town of Keady," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 155.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 4) BILL.

"To confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board for Ireland relating to Belfast (Rural) and Londonderry, and the Rathdrum and Wicklow Joint Burial Board District," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 156.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 4) BILL.

"To confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Camborne, Heston and Isleworth, Mountain Ash, New Windsor, Southport, Stratford-upon-Avon, Tunbridge Wells, and Whitley and Monkseaton," presented and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 157.]

PETITIONS.

COUNTY COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Hastings; Arundel; Swindon; and Maidenhead; to lie upon the Table.

DETENTION OF POOR PERSONS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Lilliesleaf, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Glasgow, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

Petition from Bingley, for alteration of law; to lie upon the Table.

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

Petitions against: from Grantham; and Kensington; to lie upon the Table.

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

Petition from Bristol, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.

Petitions against establishment: from Hawick; Selkirk; Galashiels; and Kelso; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF ADULTERATED BUTTER BILL.

Petitions against: from Mile End; Tamworth; Grantham; and Reading; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour: from Leicester; Wantage; and Erdington; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRADE DISPUTES.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 2nd April; *Mr. Bell*]; to lie upon the Table.

CYPRUS.

Copy presented, of annual Report on Cyprus for 1901-2 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of twenty-first annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland, being for the year 1902. Part I., General Report [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of twenty-first Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland, being for the year 1902. Part II., Salmon Fisheries [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Return of the Areas, Population, and Valuation of Counties, Burghs, and Parishes in Scotland [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

NATIONAL GALLERY, ETC. (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Ninth Annual Report to the Secretary for Scotland by the Commissioners and Trustees of the Board of Manufactures in Scotland, being for the year ending 30th September, 1902 [by Command] to lie upon the Table.

COURT OF SESSION (SCOTLAND) SHERIFF COURTS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1876.

Copy presented, of Act of Sederunt anent regulating the places in counties in Scotland at which Commissary business shall be conducted [by Act]; to lie upon the Table

REFORMATORY AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS (GREAT BRITAIN).

Copy presented, of Forty-sixth Report of His Majesty's Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools for 1902. Part I. List of schools and detailed Reports [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PAUPERISM (ENGLAND AND WALES) (HALF YEARLY STATEMENTS).

Copy ordered, "of Statement of the number of Paupers relieved on the 1st day of January, 1903, and similar Statement for the 1st day of July, 1903 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper No. 147, of Session 1902)."—(*Mr. Grant Lawson.*)

SEA FISHERIES OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, 1902.

Copy ordered, "of Statistical Tables and Memorandum relating to the Sea Fisheries of the United Kingdom in the year 1902, including also a Return showing the quantity of fish carried by railway from each of the principal ports of England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, in each year from 1897 to 1902, inclusive (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 161, of Session 1902)."—(*Mr. Gerald Balfour.*)

ROYAL NAVY (RETIRED OFFICERS).

Return ordered, "of the number and rank of Officers of the Royal Navy between the ages of forty and sixty years who, by reason of compulsory retirement under regulations as to age, were upon the Retired List on the 1st day of April, 1903, and who during their active service qualified as Torpedo Lieutenants and became specialists in submarine mining, and showing the annual aggregate charges borne on the Non-effective Votes for such Officers, in the following form:—

Qualified as specialists in torpedo and submarine service.

Rank.	Number.	Total Annual Charge borne on Non-effective Vote.
		£
Flag Officers - - - - - -		
Captains - - - - - - -		
Commanders - - - - - -		
Lieutenants - - - - - -		
Total - - - - -		

(*Sir John Colomb.*)

PAUPERISM (ENGLAND AND WALES) (HALF YEARLY STATEMENTS).

Return presented, relative thereto [Ordered 8th April; *Mr. Grant Lawson*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 108.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Merchandise Marks Act—Ceiling Laths.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that ceiling laths are imported from Sweden as raw material; and whether he will take steps to place these articles, as is done in the case of doors, windows, or mouldings, within the provisions of the Merchandise Marks Act.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) There is no record of the importation of ceiling laths from Sweden as raw material, as they are classified under the head of "wood, sawn or split, planed or dressed." Like imported doors, windows, and mouldings, they are subject to detention under the Merchandise Marks Act, 1887, when bearing objectionable marks.

London Traffic Commission—Delay in Publication of Evidence.

Sir GEORGE BARTLEY (Islington, N.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will give instructions for the printing of the London Traffic Commission's evidence with greater expedition and secure its being circulated within three days instead of seven or eight as at present.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) Arrangements have already been made for delivering printed copies of the evidence to the Commission within forty-eight hours after the receipt of the manuscript by the printers.

The National Debt.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, to state the amount of the National Debt on the 31st March, 1903, showing funded debt, estimated capital value of terminable annuities, unfunded debt, total of other capital liabilities, estimated assets, Exchequer balances, issues on account of interest and management of debt and issues on account of capital, contingent liabilities in respect of Trustee and Post Office Savings Banks and Friendly Societies, and interest on unfunded debt.

(*Answered by Mr. Ritchie.*) Information on these points will be included in the Budget statement, which I do not propose to anticipate.

Atlantic Shipping Trust Agreement.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): To ask the President of the Board of Trade, has the agreement between His Majesty's Government and Mr. Pierpont Morgan's shipping trust, known as the International Mercantile Marine Company, which had been settled by both parties on 23rd February last, now been executed; does this agreement contemplate the retention of a British register and the British flag by ships which have been acquired by and are under the dominion of a foreign corporation; and when does he propose to lay the agreement on the Table of this House.

(*Answered by Mr. Gerald Balfour.*) The agreement has not yet been executed. The draft is before the Company for final consideration, and I hope that my expectation as to the document being ready for execution before Easter may be realised. I must refer the hon. Member to my answer to his previous Question of 23rd March for the reply to the other points raised by his Question.†

Indian Government and the Brussels Sugar Convention. ✓

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: To ask the Secretary of State for India, has any reply now been received from the Indian Government to the communication whereby His Majesty's Government submitted to it the Brussels Sugar Convention; and, if so, has the Indian Government adhered to that Convention or refused its adhesion; and will he lay the correspondence upon the Table.

(*Answered by Secretary Lord George Hamilton.*) The Government of India have not yet come to a decision on the matter. There is no correspondence which at present I can conveniently lay upon the Table.

Holland, Italy and France and the Brussels Sugar Convention.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: To ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, has any reply now been received from the Dutch Government, the Italian Government, and the French Government, to the circular dispatch of 13th January, wherein His Majesty's Government expressed the conditions on which they assumed to ratify the Brussels Sugar Convention; if so, can he state shortly the purport of each reply; and when will the Papers, which were in preparation on 23rd February last, be laid on the Table.

(*Answered by Lord Cranborne.*) My hon. friend will find all the information I can give him in Commercial, No. 2, 1903.

Scotch Education—Payment of Grants by Instalments.

Mr. GEORGE BROWN (Edinburgh, Central): To ask the Lord Advocate whether he has received a petition from the School Board of Edinburgh showing that School Boards have practically no income between May and November; and whether he will modify Article 13 of the Code (1903) so that grants on account of schools may be paid in instalments throughout the year.

(*Answered by Mr. A. Graham Murray.*) The petition referred to was received by the Education Department yesterday. The article specified, and the rule as to payment of grants which it embodies, are not new but represent the consistent practice from the institution of Parliamentary grants. The petition will receive consideration, although my Lords cannot admit the accuracy of the statement that practically no income accrues between May and November. I cannot at present say whether any modification of the rule will be possible.

Treasury Expenditure in Ireland.

Mr. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the fact that there has been a saving of £440,000 per annum within the last six years upon the Treasury Expenditure in Ireland, he will state in what way the money has been disposed of.

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† See (4) *Debates*, cxix., 1462.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The hon. Member's attention does not appear to have been drawn to my reply to the similar Question on Monday last of the hon. Member for East Clare.†

Irish Land Bill—Limits under Clause 2.

MR. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state approximately the numbers and total acreage of the holdings which will be excluded by the limits of £500 or £1,000 respectively, prescribed in Clause 2 of the Land Bill; and what additions would have to be made to the cash and credit aid given under the Bill for land purchase if the whole of the holdings excluded by the limits of Clause 2 were admitted.

(*Answered by Mr. Wyndham.*) The limit in this Clause does not apply to existing holdings, but only to the sale of parcels of untenanted land; it is not therefore possible to frame any such estimate as is asked for.

Sugar Bounties in British Guiana.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies, have His Majesty's Government considered whether the contribution of the Crown Colony of British Guiana of one-third of the expense of the immigration into that colony of Indian Coolies for work on sugar plantations constitutes a direct or indirect bounty on the manufacture or exportation of sugar, such as His Majesty's Government have undertaken by the Brussels Sugar Convention to prohibit in any of the Crown Colonies; and will the question be submitted to the Permanent Commission at Brussels.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain.*) In reply to the hon. Member's Question I can only refer him to the answer returned to his previous Question of the 5th of March. His Majesty's Government have undertaken that no bounties shall be given in the Crown Colonies, and that undertaking will be carried out, and they do not anticipate that occasion will arise for reference to the Permanent Commission. I may, however, add that in view of the benefits which the Colony as a whole derives financially and otherwise from coolie immigration as being in large measure State-aided colonisation, and in view of the additional expense which is caused by the enforcement of regulations made by the Government in the public interest, the share of the total cost which is borne by the Government is not admitted to be in any sense a bounty.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Employment of Children in Theatres.

*MR. HORNER (Lambeth, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, having regard to the number of children employed throughout the country in the evening in theatrical performances, he will consent to such modifications in the Employment of Children Bill as will not debar such children from being so employed.

THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. COCHRANE, Ayrshire, N.): The point appears to be a proper one for the Committee on the Bill to entertain, and my right hon. friend will give it careful consideration.

*MR. HORNER: As so many people are interested in this matter cannot the hon. Gentleman say something more satisfactory?

MR. COCHRANE: I am afraid I can add nothing to my reply.

Theddingworth Village School.

MR. LOGAN (Leicestershire, Harborough): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether he is aware that under an arrangement made at a meeting held at the Vicarage, Theddingworth, Leicestershire, in March, 1880, the two schools of the village, one a Church school and the other a Nonconformist school, were then amalgamated on non-sectarian lines, and that under that arrangement the Committee of Management of the school has, for the last twenty-two years, consisted of the vicar and two churchwardens and three Nonconformists, appointed by the trustees of a fund left for the education of the Nonconformist children of Theddingworth, the said fund contributing half the cost of the school above the grants and to the maintenance of the buildings; and whether, in view of the attempt now being made under the provisions of the Education Act of 1902, to get the management of the school into the hands of Church of England managers, he will take steps to ensure that the Nonconformists will be represented on the new Management Committee in the same proportions as under the arrangement which has been in existence for twenty-two years.

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† See page 1124.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Sir WILLIAM ANSON, Oxford University): No order in this case has been made under Section 11 of the Education Act. It would be extremely difficult to frame an order under that Section which would do justice to all the parties concerned, inasmuch as the school buildings are held under express trusts the provisions of which cannot be ignored. The vicar and trustees have asked for an inquiry, and an inquiry will be held by the Board. It is possible that the difficulties of the case may be met by a scheme under the Charitable Trusts Acts.

Gloucestershire County Council Education Scheme.

MR. CHARLES ALLEN (Gloucestershire, Stroud): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Board of Education whether his attention has been called to representations from teachers concerned as to the clause in the scheme of the Gloucestershire County Council which debars school teachers in the employ of the County Council from serving on the Education Committee of the county, which has received the sanction of the Board of Education; and, if so, whether he will reconsider this decision.

SIR WILLIAM ANSON: The representations in question were referred to the Gloucestershire County Council. The Council fully considered them, and decided that, though they were ready to provide, and did provide, for the presence of teachers on their committee, they considered that the presence of salaried officials on this committee was undesirable. This is clearly a matter which rests in the discretion of the Council, and the scheme was approved on the 18th March. No reconsideration by the Board is now possible.

Kingstown Town Tenancy.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware of the position of town tenants, inhabitant householders, and tenement occupiers in Kingstown, South Dublin, and of the fact that the township leases generally will terminate in May; and will he consider the advisability of taking steps to enable town tenants to remain in their holdings until negotiations are concluded, and inhabitant householders and tenement occupiers to continue in possession until housing accommodation is provided.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): The leases of a large number of dwellings in Kingstown will expire next month. Fears have been expressed that the houses will forthwith be demolished and the tenants evicted. The agents over the property assure me, however, that these fears are groundless.

Ireland—Boards of Guardians and Tenders for Medical Stores.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will explain why the Local Government Board objects to boards of guardians specifying that tenders for only Irish manufactured pharmaceutical preparations will be received.

MR. WYNDHAM: Some boards of guardians in Ireland, when recently advertising for the annual supplies of medicines for the sick poor, stipulated that only tenders for Irish manufactured pharmaceutical preparations would be received. This action appears to have been suggested by a Dublin firm of manufacturers. Such a proposal, if adopted, would restrict free and open competition by excluding English and Scotch firms from tendering for these goods, and is not one of which the Local Government Board, in the interests of the taxpayers at large, could approve. The hon. Member is doubtless aware that one-half the cost of drugs and medicines is recouped to local authorities out of moneys provided by the State.

Irish Land Purchase.

MR. GEORGE FABER (York): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, (1) whether he can state the total number of cases in which proceedings have been instituted by civil Bill or otherwise for the recovery of instalments of annuities due under the Purchase Acts, 1885, 1888, 1891, 1896; (2) the total number of cases in which arrears of instalments, due on the 1st November last, have been placed in the hands of solicitors for recovery (3) the average number of years purchase paid for lands sold under the Purchase Acts, 1885, 1888, 1891, 1896, and (4) the total acreage of lands so sold, specifying the amount in each county; (5) the number of cases in which purchasers who have purchased under the said Acts have mortgaged or alienated their holdings, and the proportion which such cases bear to the total number of purchases made.

MR. WYNDHAM: I am not in a position to reply to the first inquiry today, but the information is being tabulated. The total number of cases in which arrears of instalments due on 1st November last that have been placed in the hands of solicitors for recovery is 1,320 under the Acts of 1885-1888, and 754 under the Acts of 1891-1896. As already stated, it may be taken for granted that the arrears will rapidly be recovered. I recently laid on the Table † a Return containing information in respect to the average rates of purchase since 1885. The last annual Report of the Land Commission, which has also been presented to Parliament, shows at pages 89 and 116 the acreage of lands sold in each county under the Acts mentioned. There is no information obtainable to enable a reply to be given to the concluding inquiry.

THE BAGDAD RAILWAY.

(2.30.) THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.) formally moved, "That this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, April 21."

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 21st April."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said he was glad to see the Prime Minister in his place, because he wished to refer to an answer given by his right hon. friend with reference to the German Anatolian or Baghdad railway and the action of the Government with regard to it. It was said by his right hon. friend that the Anatolian project was not a German one; but he thought there he had made a mistake.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No, no mistake.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said he thought he would be able to show from official consular authority that this was undoubtedly a German railway unless its character had recently changed. It was in its conception a German project, and one which as a commercial undertaking was quite unlikely to give any return for the capital embarked in it. The only way of supporting it would be by a Turkish Government guarantee, founded on an increase of Turkish taxation and of the Turkish customs duties which were largely paid by British merchants. If successful it would destroy the existing British railways in Turkey, and therefore it was inadvisable for the Government to give the scheme any sort of encouragement whatever. He did not now propose to trouble the House with the political aspect of the question, although that was extremely important, as one of the chief objections to the project was that at this very moment we were engaged in negotiations with Russia in regard to coming to an amicable understanding with respect to our respective interests in those regions. That being so he thought it would be peculiarly unfortunate if, during the recess or at any future time, any encouragement should be given towards this projected German railway through Asia Minor. He was going to deal with the matter solely on commercial grounds, and he had the advantage of a consular report by Vice-Consul Sarell which dealt with that very matter, and which, partly owing to the action of the noble Lord the Member for the Cricklade Division, was published in July, 1901. On page 4 of that Report he found the following:—

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† Parliamentary Paper, No. 90, of this Session.

"A table is appended showing the relation of British to foreign shipping passing through the Bosphorus. From this it will be seen that whereas in 1893 the United Kingdom accounted for 70 per cent. of the total of steamers clearing in Constantinople, in 1899 only 53 per cent. were under the British flag. Taking the tonnage instead of the number of vessels the figures are 75 and 61 per cent. respectively. The German steamers cleared in 1898, though still only representing an infinitesimal fraction of the total, show nearly twice the percentage shown in 1893."

This showed that British trade with Turkey was already decreasing, while that of Germany was increasing, and he submitted therefore that this was not a moment at which we should do anything to increase our disabilities. The right hon. Gentleman in his answer had said that the proposed railway was not German. Surely he could not have read Vice-Consul Sarell's Report. On page 16 the Vice Consul said—

"After a prolonged struggle between rival groups of financiers the Haidar-Pasha-Ismid line passed into the hands of a group controlled by the Deutsche Bank of Berlin, and it was successively extended through Eskishehr to Angora on the east and Konia on the south, and is now known as the Anatolian railway. A glance at the map will show that it has tapped the district upon which the Smyrna-Aidin line depends for its existence. The position of the Aidin railway will be considered later. From Konia a concession has been promised to the German group for a line through Adana, Marash, Urfa, Mardin, and Mosul to Bagdad, and thence down the valley of the Euphrates to the Persian Gulf. The country has been surveyed and the commercial prospects of the line have also been carefully examined. The conclusion resulting from this investigation is that the line will cost the sum of £20,000,000 to build and that for a long time to come it must be dependent very largely upon Government assistance. The sum required for the payment of the interest will be £1,000,000 per annum. A great part of the district traversed is very sparsely populated, and much land is consequently quite uncultivated, while the difficulties in the way of travellers, especially natives, in the interior of this country render the prospects of the passenger traffic very poor."

He really thought that that report showed conclusively that the railway was German and that the First Lord of the Treasury was under some misapprehension when he said it was not.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am absolutely accurate.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said he had, of course, only the Vice-Consul's report to rely upon, and that said the line was in the hands of a German group. But perhaps his right hon. friend would, in his reply, deal with this point, and explain wherein he was wrong in his belief, derived from Mr. Sarell's report, that this railway was essentially German. On another page he read—

"It is in Asia Minor that the greatest development of the railway construction has been witnessed during the last ten years, and the fact that the new lines are in foreign hands, while lines formerly in British hands have passed to those of foreigners is a common cause of regret and complaint on the part of British merchants established in this country."

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Hear, hear.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said he supposed that the right hon. Gentleman by his cheer suggested that it would be best for future lines in Asia Minor to be British. Well, what he wanted to secure was that in regard to these projects there should not be any joint Venezuelan action in Asia Minor, and that we should not be hanging on the skirts of German financiers. The railway, whether built by British or by German capital, was destined to ruin the existing British railways in Turkey, for the Vice-Consul told them—

"The Smyrna-Aidin Railway is the only line in Turkey which is in British hands. It was the first railway line built in Turkey, and was one of the numerous plans for the regeneration and development of the country which followed the Crimean War. The district it traverses is most fertile, and up to the granting of the concession for the Konia line, and later for the Bagdad line, its power of extension and development seemed unlimited.

It has always been a commercial line, and the traffic receipts show the best possible justification for its existence, while it is universally admitted to be the best built and best managed line in Turkey."

"With the new extension of the Anatolian line, which followed the acquisition by the German group of the concession, the Anatolian line at once became the rival of the Smyrna lines, and a railway was the result, in which all the political advantage is on the side of the Anatolian Railway Company, while it has to contend with the commercial advantages of Smyrna as an outlet over either Ismid or Haidar Pasha. In the meantime the prospects of the shareholders in the Aidin Railway give cause for anxiety."

This was a very serious question. But there came the fact that Turkish railways lived largely, not on their earnings, but on Turkish guarantees and subsidies. As to this, the Vice-Consul said—

"The system of Government guarantees has undoubtedly gone a very long way towards neutralising the benefit accruing to the country from the opening up of railway communication. The sums guaranteed are charged on the tithes, and this leads to greater severity in their collection, and makes the railways an indirect burden on the taxpayer. In the course of time this will disappear to a considerable extent, but a very long time must elapse before any of the lines, especially in Asiatic Turkey, justify their existence from a commercial point of view, with the single exception of the Smyrna-Aidin line which has no kilometric guarantee."

The system which obtained in Turkey was that the Government gave a kilometric guarantee, which had to be drawn from the tithes and the taxes when, as was almost always the case, the railway did not earn from its traffic enough to keep itself. The last extract with which he proposed to trouble the House was to be found on page 22 of the Report, where the figures for the kilometric guarantees granted by the Turkish Government were given. In the year 1887, the length of line open was 4,194 kilometres, the receipts were £1,811,543; and the amount paid under the guarantee £315,716. In 1899 the length had increased to 4,496 kilometres, but the receipts had fallen to £1,303,094, and the Government guarantee had had to be enlarged to £815,399. Thus the longer the line the smaller the receipts and the greater the sum obtained from the Turkish Government which had to obtain it from increased taxation. Clearly these railways were in an altogether uneconomical, unnatural, false and bad position—bad for themselves, and very bad and dangerous for Turkey, and oppressive for the Turkish people, and the Anatolian Railway would, as Mr. Sarell pointed out, be specially subject to the obnoxious conditions which produced that state of affairs. As he understood the answer of the right hon. Gentleman, there had been negotiations between the British Government on the one side, and the German and French Governments on the other.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I said there were not.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I had better read the right hon. Gentleman's words.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Hear, hear!

MR. GIBSON BOWLES—

"The subject was referred to in two brief conversations, one with the French and one with the German Ambassador in March, 1902."

But since then further communications had taken place.

MR. BALFOUR: They have not taken place.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: The answer of the right hon. Gentleman says—

"Communications have been and are still going on with British capitalists on the subject."

He presumed that these negotiations were between foreign Governments and British capitalists.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Not at all.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Then they were between the British Government and British capitalists.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Then the negotiations——

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: There never were any negotiations.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Then there were brief conversations, yet no negotiations, and "no final arrangements have been arrived at." Later on they were told by the right hon. Gentleman in his answer that two proposals were now under consideration.

> "(1) That British capital and British control are to be on an absolute equality with the capital and control of any other Power, and (2) that in respect to the negotiations which are now going on with the Turkish Government for a new Commercial Treaty . . . His Majesty's Government should not object to a reasonable increase in the (Turkish Customs) duties."

So it was contemplated that the guarantees were to go on increasing while the revenues of the guaranteed railways were to go on diminishing, and that the Customs duties were in consequence to be added to to find the guaranteed sums. That was a serious prospect. These Customs duties in Turkey were very largely paid by British merchants and consequently any increase in them would fall on British trade. They would thus be levying an increased charge on British goods in order to add to the profits of a German railway, so that British capitalists——

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: That is not correct.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: The right hon. Gentleman can demolish me presently.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: My written answer is in the hands of the hon. Member and he ought not to misinterpret it.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I am not misrepresenting the right hon. Gentleman's answer. I am giving my own view of the result of the arrangement. The answer suggested that the Government might be prepared to agree to an increase of the Customs duties, and his object was to show what in his opinion would be the effect on British interests if the scheme adumbrated in the answer were carried out. There was a third suggestion that if the railway should prove to be a success it might be a better route for the mails to India, and that again was a suggestion to deprive English mail carriers of their contracts in order to give them to this railway, which, pending further explanation, he must still regard as German. The final suggestion made was that His Majesty's Government should assist, not by money, or the promise of money, but by their good offices, in providing a proper terminus at or near Koweyt. He certainly should like some further information on that point. He had never heard so far that it was proposed to run this Anatolian railway so far as Koweyt. Koweyt was especially under our influence, and he had always understood that we got it under our influence in order, among other reasons, to prevent the railway from going there. It was, he believed, either in Turkish territory or in the territory of an independent sheikh or pasha; and he should like to know in what way it was suggested that England should use her friendly offices in order to procure the establishment of a terminus for the railway at or near Koweyt. He ventured to suggest to the Government that it would be both politically and economically a mistake if they were to go out of their way to give any advantage or special countenance to this German railway—if it was a German railway as he still believed it to be—in such a manner as to induce British capitalists to put their money into it. If they left the capitalists alone, he thought they would fight extremely shy of this railway. What he would suggest to His Majesty's Government was that they should leave the British capitalists alone and not extend the light of their countenance to any part of the railway in any of the directions which were suggested to them. He understood that these suggestions were still under consideration, and it was because they were still under consideration that he had ventured to make these few remarks.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) said he thought his hon. friend was a little ungrateful to the Prime Minister, who had given him so full and explicit an answer to his question—an answer he himself felt to be of a reassuring character. They all knew that Mesopotamia was a blessed word, and he hoped on this occasion it would be a word of peace. They all felt that it was impossible for this country to oppose the introduction of a railway through Mesopotamia. The only wonder was that the railway was not made forty or fifty years ago instead of being left until now. He confessed that the answer of the Prime Minister to his hon. friend the Member for King's Lynn was of a reassuring rather than of an alarming character, and indicated that the Government had in view those considerations which the House would desire they should have in view. His hon. friend had suggested that the line was a German line, and that any agreement with Germany in regard to it would be in the nature of that Venezuelan agreement which they all looked on with so much dislike, and hoped they would never see repeated. At the time of the Consular Report to which his hon. friend had referred, no doubt the railway was an entirely German scheme. But it was a well-known fact that the German syndicate found great difficulties in their way, and that they approached the Ottoman Bank and British capitalists with a view of enlarging their operations and making an international scheme out of what was a German scheme. What they had to see was that the Government made proper conditions for British trade and for British capital, without whose assistance this line would not be made. He agreed with the hon. Member for King's Lynn in thinking that the suggestion as to an increase of the Turkish Customs was one that ought to be viewed with very strict scrutiny. It was universally the case—not so completely perhaps as in China, but still greatly the case—that an increase of the Turkish Customs might be mainly paid by British trade. There was always some reason to suspect an increase of maritime Customs when arrangements were made with neighbouring powers for a frontier trade which suited them but not us, and undoubtedly the frontier arrangements in the Balkan peninsula had been disastrous to our trade, which was entirely maritime. That was a matter which the Government must therefore most carefully watch. The trump cards we held were, above all, our position in the Persian Gulf. The very fact that, as he understood from the Prime Minister's answer, we had been applied to with a view to Koweyt being given as a terminus for the railway showed that, in spite of what they had been told, Koweyt continued to be, in the opinion of those who knew, the best terminus for this railway. If that were so, then undoubtedly we held the trump cards in our hands, because Koweyt could not be taken as a terminus without our consent. He hoped that in anything the Government did they would most steadily maintain not only our privileged but our monopoly-position in the Persian Gulf. He heard with great pleasure the words of the noble Lord the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs some time ago as to our absolute insistence on the *status quo* in the Persian Gulf, which, it appeared to him, was vital to our policy. If we should be tempted into introducing any foreign Power to the coast of the Persian Gulf so that there they might open up, at the head of the railway, a great naval station, we should have forced upon us the necessity of making an additional naval expenditure which it would be intolerable to have to face. It was far better to say at once, as we had said, that we would not tolerate the admission of any foreign Power on the Persian Gulf itself. That being so, while there was reason for watchfulness, he saw no reason for fresh alarm in consequence of the answer given by the Government, which was a very full and, it seemed to him, a fair and on the whole a satisfactory answer.

Lord EDMUND FITZMAURICE (Wiltshire, Cricklade) said the hon. Member for King's Lynn had called attention to a Consular Report, with which he had been good enough to identify his action in that House a few sessions ago. He had long been anxious that, if possible, the Government should make some statement with regard to the negotiations which were believed to be going on with regard to the future development of railway communication in Asia Minor. The speeches to which they had listened showed that it was almost impossible in discussing that question to isolate the commercial from the political aspect, and undoubtedly what interested the public in this question was not so much the rivalry between the companies starting from Smyrna, important as were the commercial aspects of this question. What made the House take a real live interest in it was the feeling that, bound up with the future of this railway, there was probably the future political control of large regions in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, and the Persian Gulf. He did not think the Government could have made any fuller statement on this question. They all, of course, realised that it was one of the very greatest importance. He thought the Government had given as full an answer as present circumstances permitted. Let them analyse the effect of that answer. It appeared from the first head, that the Foreign Office were determined that British capital and control were to be on an absolute equality with the capital and control of any other Power. That part of the answer was of great importance, because there had long been a feeling in Turkey, and in Constantinople in particular, that British trade had suffered in those regions; that there had been a certain want of assistance to our trade. In regard to the second head, the question of Turkish Customs was most important to British trade. The old Turkish Customs were more or less favourable to British trade, and, therefore, any alteration was closely watched by the Foreign Office. Under the third and fourth heads of this answer he felt we were touching delicate political ground; we were touching on all those great interests which the mere mention of Koweyt suggested. He did not recollect the noble Lord giving any answer in this House which directly conveyed that any negotiations were going on with Russia with the intention of admitting parity on the part of Russia or any other Power in the Persian Gulf.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES said he did not suggest anything of the sort. What he had suggested was that the noble Lord said negotiations were going on with Russia with a view to arriving at an amicable understanding with her with regard to our interests in Persia and elsewhere.

Lord EDMUND FITZMAURICE thought that was an expression which would include the Persian Gulf. Passing for a moment to the question of our relations with Turkey, he might be perhaps pardoned for saying a few words on a matter closely connected with this subject. We could not consider the position of Turkey in Asia without considering the position of the Turkish Empire generally. If a great conflict should take place in those regions, any arrangements which might be made by British or German Houses with regard to railways in Asia Minor would assume a new character, and might be rendered abortive as soon as they were made. Therefore he hoped the First Lord of the Treasury would indicate that the position in Macedonia was receiving the close attention of the Government. In those regions things were travelling rapidly, and the greatest strain would soon be placed on our diplomacy. He did not for a moment doubt that our diplomacy would be adequate to the occasion. But the snows were disappearing in the mountains of Albania and Macedonia, which meant that a time of action was approaching. They read in the papers of to-day that there was a grave political crisis in Servia, that the Constitution had been suspended, and they all remembered that it was a crisis in Servia which ushered in the war of 1878. They saw that in Old Servia, which was still nominally Turkish territory, a state of civil war was in existence, and Old Servia was the most dangerous point in the whole of the Balkan Peninsula. The Albanians, too, had risen in such numbers that the other day they actually attacked the town of Monastir, the centre of Turkish government in those regions and the terminus of a newly-constructed railway. Lastly, in the neighbourhood of Salonika itself armed bands were roving about, and the bridges of the railway, one by one, were being blown up. Nobody could fail to see that this spring we should be confronted with a state of affairs closely resembling that which heralded the great crisis which ended in the Russo-Turkish war. He quoted a letter he had received from Lord Goschen, in which he said that although twenty-three years had passed since he was Ambassador at the Porte, nevertheless, as far as he could judge, the state of things was absolutely unaltered; in those days he too had to deal with a trouble in Albania, a trouble in Old Servia, and a trouble in Macedonia. It was then possible, though it required a great deal of imagination, to believe that a final appeal to the Turkish Government would induce them to put their house in order. Did anybody believe that now? The Turkish Government had proclaimed their intention of applying the same scheme of reforms to Albania as to Macedonia; but the thing was a farce. It would have been just as reasonable if two centuries ago British statesmen had announced their intention of proclaiming the British Constitution in the Highlands of Scotland, and had expected everybody in consequence to be happy. He believed it was beyond the power of the Turkish Government to do such a thing. The key to the satisfactory settlement of these regions must be found in the recognition of the claims of the various nationalities, and not in any paper reforms, and the intervention and supervision of the great Powers of Europe would be required before justice could be done to these long-suffering populations.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR, who was imperfectly heard, said: Perhaps I had better deal with the three speeches already delivered to the House rather than wait until other topics are introduced which might carry away the attention of hon. Gentlemen to different fields of controversy. I see the hon. Member for Carnarvon is charged with thunder and lightning, which I understand he is going to discharge at my devoted head at a later stage; and, if that forecast be correct, the House will perhaps allow me to make a further reply, the subject being, I understand, so absolutely alien to the Balkan Peninsula or the Bagdad railway, [AN HON. MEMBER: Brewers.] that I should only confuse the House if I were to try to deal with everything at once. The latter part of the noble Lord's speech referred to a topic which has during the whole of my political life, at all events, been an ever-recurring cause of anxiety to European statesmen. Sometimes the question of the administration of the Balkan Peninsula has been acute, and sometimes it has been sub-acute; but never at any time has the condition of the various Christian populations subject to the Porte in that Peninsula been other than the cause, sometimes of preoccupation, sometimes of grave anxiety, on the part of European statesmen. I do not mean to dwell upon the picture the noble Lord has drawn. The noble Lord has painted in very dark colours the existing condition of affairs in that part of Europe; and, dark though those colours are, I do not think he has exaggerated in any way the state of affairs which prevails in Macedonia. The noble Lord asked whether the attention of the British Foreign Office was directed towards the disturbed districts. The noble Lord of course will know what answer I shall return to that question. I am sure he entertains no doubt that it has been and is necessarily a cause of grave anxiety to us. But, as the House is aware, there is one very wide difference between the condition of things now and the condition of things which prevailed at the period with which the noble Lord has compared the present position of affairs in Macedonia. The new aspect of the situation is that Austria and Russia are working cordially together with the view to do what can be done to improve the position of affairs, and to introduce those elementary principles of sound government which, rather than any well balanced constitutional changes, are what is really required to make the lives of Christians of all denominations, as well as of the Moslems of all nationalities, peaceful and tolerable. Those two Powers are, in their own opinion, and in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, the Powers most primarily and directly interested in the condition of the Balkan Peninsula; and I fear that what cannot be done by their cordial and honest co-operation cannot be done at all. I do not believe there is anything that we can do, but what we can do of course we shall do by exercising all the influence of which we are masters, and all the pressure we can command in the same beneficent direction in which Russia and Austria desire to move. But the task is a difficult one for them, and I confess I entertain but feeble hopes that the other signatories to the Treaty of Berlin, anxious as they are to do their best to put an end to the present intolerable state of affairs, will be able to devise any thoroughly satisfactory medicament for the disease which is afflicting that portion of the Turkish Empire.

Now, Sir, I pass from that question to the topic which was first raised by my hon. friend the Member for King's Lynn, and with regard to which we have had interesting and important speeches from the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean and from the noble

Lord the Member for the Cricklade division. The House will see from the very full answer I have placed on the Paper of the House that these questions raised in connection with the Bagdad railway are under the consideration of His Majesty's Government; and it would be impossible for me really to go further, and to make a statement, or, indeed to offer a conjecture as to the decision the Government will arrive at. Evidently, the matter being under consideration, it is not fit for full treatment in this House. Therefore, all I can say on the subject is to correct certain misconceptions into which my hon. friend has fallen. As I understand the matter, the right hon. Baronet and the noble Lord are not in disagreement with the general principle which underlies the answer which I have placed on the Paper; but my hon. friend, I think, is in a different position. I think he has made some mistakes of fact, and perhaps I shall reassure him if I correct those mistakes of fact. In the first place, my hon. friend sees two objections. One is that in some way or other the German Government is involved; and the second is that we are, to use his own expression, hanging on to the skirts of German financiers. I can assure my hon. friend that neither of these suspicions has the smallest foundation in fact. There is not now, nor has there ever been, any question of negotiating with the German Government, or with another Government quite as much interested in this matter as the German Government — namely, the French Government. My hon. friend, in the whole course of his speech never once, I think, mentioned France. Perhaps he thought himself justified in the omission because there is only a passing reference to France in the answer I have placed on the Paper of the House; but if I only made a passing reference to France, it was because I strictly kept myself to the question to which I was engaged in replying, not because I think the *rôle* of France ought to be less kept in view than the *rôle* of Germany. As the House is probably aware, the German group of financiers and the French group are entirely agreed in their plans; and I have no doubt whatever that whatever course English financiers may take, and whatever course the English Government may pursue, sooner or later this great undertaking will be carried out. There is no difficulty in point of money. Whether the English Government assist or do not assist, it is undoubtedly in the power of the British Government to hamper and impede and inconvenience any project of the kind; but that the project will ultimately be carried out, with or without our having a share in it, there is no question whatever. Therefore the point on which His Majesty's Government will ultimately have to decide, and which the House may safely and wisely take into consideration, is whether it is or is not desirable that, if this railway connecting the base of the Mediterranean with the Persian Gulf is to be constructed, British capital and British interests should be as largely represented in it as the capital and interest of any foreign Power. That is exactly the question which will have to be considered and determined. Of course there are collateral considerations—but that is the main one—and to some of these I will address myself. My hon. friend and the right hon. Baronet very properly alluded to that portion of my answer which deals with the proposed raising of the Turkish Customs. That is an aspect of the question which deserves the most careful attention of the Government; but it is a mistake to suppose that the suggestion that the Turkish Customs should be raised was started in connection with this railway. As the House knows, it has long been under discussion, and it will have to be dealt with in negotiating any new treaty with Turkey; and before any assent which we may be induced to give to the raising of the Customs is given, we should, quite apart from the Bagdad railway, require from the Turkish Government a *quid pro quo*—such, for instance, as alterations as regards sanitary arrangements and in other matters very important to British trade. The right hon. Baronet said that the burden would be met by British trade.

*Sir CHARLES DILKE: I did not say wholly met, but largely met. Not so largely as in the case of China.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I think our fiscal economy is a little mixed on this question of the alteration of tariffs, because when a tax is put on in this country it is always contended by hon. Members opposite that it is the consumer who pays. I have no doubt that is a thesis which the right hon. Baronet in dealing, not with the Turkish Customs, but with British finance, has himself promulgated on more than one occasion. Therefore, I do not think he ought to describe the burden of the Turkish Customs as falling necessarily on the British importer. In the first place, the Turkish Customs are now low, and I do not suppose they will, in any rearrangement, be described as high. I think our general taxation in our own protectorates is about 10 per cent., and I am not aware that there is any proposal that will cause the Turkish tariff to rise to 11 per cent.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: The point to which I called attention is that in some of these cases more favourable arrangements are made for frontier trade than for maritime trade, and I pointed out that it is with maritime trade that we are so largely concerned.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I was not aware that that was the right hon. Baronet's point. Unquestionably that aspect of the case is one which must engage the attention of the Government. It will be the earnest desire of His Majesty's Government to prevent any preferential treatment to the disadvantage of the British producer. There are three points which ought not to be lost sight of by the House when trying to make up their minds upon this problem in its incomplete state. They have to consider whether it is or is not desirable that what will be undoubtedly the shortest route to India should be entirely in the hands of French and German capitalists to the exclusion of British capitalists. Another question is whether they do or do not think it desirable, that if there is to be a trade opening in the Persian Gulf, it should be within the territories of a Sheik whom we have under our special protection, and with whom we have special treaties, or whether it should be in some other part of the Persian Gulf where we have no such preferential advantage. The House must also have in view a third consideration with regard to a railway which goes through a very rich country, and which I am informed is not likely to be of the financially disastrous character which my hon. friend prophesies, but is rather likely after a certain period of development to add greatly to the riches of Turkey, and indirectly, I suppose, greatly to the riches of any other country which is ready to take advantage of it. Whether the British producer will be able to take advantage of it is not for me to say; but the House will have to consider whether he is more likely to be able to take advantage of it, if English capital is largely interested, than if it is confined to French and German capital. The House will have to calculate whether it is desirable that this railway should be constructed with French and German capital, and whether it will be prudent to leave the passenger traffic in the hands of those two nations, with whom we are on the most friendly terms, but whose interests may not be identical with our own. My hon. friend represents this as an attempt to help out Germany in her policy. The House must consider whether that is so, or whether it may not be represented in quite a different light as an endeavour to prevent a policy of railway construction in Asia Minor from falling entirely into French or German hands. I should ask any hon. Gentleman who is interested in this subject not to forget that aspect of the question. I have always in the general aspect of our policy, in dealing with these parts of the world, looked forward to bringing in more than one nation rather than to actual partition into separate territories. Whether this is a step in the direction of that general policy may be questioned, and is, I frankly admit, open to doubt. But it is on the whole our interest that countries which certainly we cannot absorb should not, on the other hand, be wholly and absolutely absorbed by either one or two other Powers; and I should have thought that this great international highway had better be in the hands of three great countries than in those of two or one; and, if it is to be in European hands, there is much to be said in favour of its being in the hands partly of this country as well as partly in the hands of France and Germany. The question is, however, not without difficulty. My hon. friend puts the difficulties with great force. The Government intend to give the whole subject their most careful consideration, and I am sure the House will not ask me to say anything more precise or definite at the present time. I have endeavoured to lay before them some aspects of the case which my hon. friend forgot, although I think the right hon. Baronet and the noble Lord had them present to their minds. I shall leave the question in the condition in which these few words place it. The decision of the Government must be come to with no undue delay. It is impossible to allow the matter to be hung up, but I will not anticipate a decision which has not been arrived at, and of which it is not possible for me at present to give any forecast to the House.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) said he was glad that the noble Lord this afternoon had saved him from the duty he intended to perform in calling attention to the position of affairs in Macedonia, and it would not be necessary for him to say more than one or two words. The noble Lord said quite truly that a great deal of interest had been aroused with reference to the reports from Macedonia and other places in reference to the position of the Christian populations there. The Prime Minister devoted about two minutes of his speech to the position of the populations in those districts which he admitted were as critical as they possibly could be, and he devoted the rest of his speech to the Bagdad Railway. There was a very widespread feeling in this country which would not allow the position of the Christian population of Macedonia and other districts to be dismissed in that way, and there was a strong feeling that the Government should do something more than the Prime Minister had foreshadowed. The right hon. Gentleman admitted that it would be impossible to paint in too dark colours the position of the Christian population in Macedonia, and while admitting that grave position freely, the Prime Minister practically declared that the Government was not in a position to do anything to ease the situation, or to bring peace to those disturbed districts. He said that Russia and Austria were the powers most interested in this matter, and then he made the most astonishing statement that if Russia and Austria were unable to have their reforms carried out nothing could be done, and the Christian populations were practically to be left to their fate. That would be taken as a direct encouragement to the Government of Turkey to pursue their old policy of doing practically nothing at all. When the right hon. Gentleman said that this country was not in a position to do anything more, he should remember that the Government of this country was supposed to have enormous weight, power, and influence with the Government of Turkey. And what he wanted to ask the noble Lord the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was what representations His Majesty's Government had made through their Ambassador to the Government of Turkey in reference to the position of affairs in Macedonia and Albania. He had read that the British Ambassador was received cordially by the Sultan, who had promised that order should be restored and that the reforms advocated by Russia and Austria would be carried out. He wished to know if that report was true. Did the Sultan make that statement, and what representations did the British Ambassador make to the Sultan in reference to the situation in Macedonia? He asked the noble Lord to say whether the Government had given their approval to the policy of Russia and Austria in this matter, and he wished to know if no steps would be left untaken to make the Government of Turkey thoroughly understand that this was a matter in which the people of this country were deeply interested and that the position, the lives, and the property of those Christians must be properly safeguarded and protected by the Government of Turkey. He asked a question the other day † with regard to the attack of the Albanians upon Mitrovitza, and the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs replied that the Government had no information tending to show that the Christian inhabitants of Mitrovitza were in any danger.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord CRANBORNE, Rochester): I said special danger. That is, no more danger than anybody else.

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† See page 1249.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND thought it was the business of the Government to know all about this matter. It was a monstrous thing to come to this House like the Prime Minister had done and state that this was a bad state of affairs, but that it was the affair of Austria and Russia, and if those countries could not deal with it, nobody else could. That was a policy which he did not believe would meet with the approval of the country at large. He wished to know whether the statement was true that the British Ambassador had made representations to the Sultan and that he had received satisfactory declarations from the Sultan in regard to this matter.

LORD CRANBORNE: The hon. Member has criticised rather severely an answer which I delivered a few days ago in repect of the troubles in Macedonia, and he says that the Foreign Office ought to know more than they do upon this subject.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Yes, and they ought to send a special envoy there.

LORD CRANBORNE: The question was in regard to the Albanians who attacked Mitrovitza. I think the hon. Gentleman is really under a misapprehension as to the real state of things. It is not only the Christians but the Mohammedans also who are misgoverned. It is not only the Christians who are in danger of murder and outrage, but the Mohammedans as well, and there is no distinction to be made between one class of the population and the other. His Majesty's Government have always made representations to Turkey with a view to the improvement of the Government of all sections of the population. Those representations have been repeated with a wearisome monotony through many years. The hon. Gentleman asks if we got a favourable reply. If favourable replies would do anything Turkey would have been well governed many years ago. The British Ambassador in Turkey always gets a favourable reply, and I believe the intentions of the Turkish Government are to remedy this state of things. But the disease from which they are suffering is incompetence.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: That is a common disease.

LORD CRANBORNE: I need not dwell upon the state of things there because my hon. friend has already described it to the House, but the hon. Gentleman has asked me what action the Government have taken. We have made frequent representations of late, and the last one was no longer ago than the 31st of March, when, under instructions from the Foreign Office, Sir Nicholas O'Conor impressed upon the Turkish Government the importance of losing no time in sending out European officers to reorganise the gendarmerie. That is the latest representation we have made. In every way we are doing all we can to second the efforts of Austria and Russia with a view to securing the better Government of those provinces. As the hon. Gentleman is aware the British Consuls in Austria and Russia have been instructed to lend what assistance they can by way of suggestions. The Government are considering whether it would be better if British officers could accompany the Turkish troops with a view of giving some guarantee that no excesses are committed.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Might I ask the noble Lord whether that very satisfactory arrangement he has referred to has been accepted by the Turkish Government?

LORD CRANBORNE: It is now under the consideration of the British Government. I do not know whether there is any other point on which I can enlighten the hon. Gentleman, but I think hon. Members will acquit the Government of any desire to withhold information.

THE REDUCTION OF LICENCES.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs) said he did not propose to continue the discussion on the question of Macedonia, although he was glad to hear that through their envoy they were supplying a prescription for curing the disease which had been referred to. Perhaps that prescription would also be applied at home in some of the Government Departments at the same time. He wished to call attention to the speech recently delivered by the Prime Minister to the licensed victuallers as to the action of the magistrates. He was not going to discuss some questions which were raised in the course of that speech, because it would be clearly out of order to do so. Certain suggestions were made as to an alteration in the law, but that would also be out of order. He wished to refer to the purely administrative suggestions made by the Prime Minister, and he thought that would be in order. His comment upon that was, that he thought this was the first time that a gentleman of the Prime Minister's great position had passed severe condemnation upon the action of the judicial bench, whilst its decisions were *sub judice.* It must be recollected with regard to the majority of the decisions scoffed at, that they were subject to appeal at the Quarter Sessions, and therefore the Prime Minister was condemning them with regard to decisions which were under consideration by a Court of Appeal. The right hon. Gentleman was not satisfied with only condemning the magistrates, but he appealed to the Court, which is to consider their decisions, to reverse them. He ventured to say there was no case on record where anyone in the position of Prime Minister had ever appealed to a Court, before it came to consider the cases, to arrive at certain decisions. It was a new and very dangerous precedent, and he very much regretted that the Prime Minister should have set it. It was true that the magistrates had been pretty active in their administration of the licensing laws, but either they were within or without the law. If they were acting outside the law, the Prime Minister knew perfectly well that there were two or three Courts to which licensed victuallers could appeal. They could appeal to the Quarter Sessions, and if the Quarter Sessions were similarly permeated with this rancorous feeling against them, there was an appeal to the Divisional Court, then the Court of Appeal, and finally the House of Lords. It must be assumed that they were acting within the law, and what did that mean? The Prime Minister, in answer to an *ex parte* application made to him by the parties personally aggrieved by the decisions in the lowest Court, actually expressed an opinion without knowing the law, without knowing the facts, without knowing anything at all about the circumstances, and knowing there was an appeal upon questions of law, expressed an opinion adverse to the decisions and appealed to the Court of Appeal to reverse them. That he would repeat was a perfectly unprecedented action, and one which the Prime Minister would realise was a gross indiscretion on his part, at any rate. If licensed victuallers were exceedingly poor, and could not take their action beyond the lower Court, there might be something to be said for the Prime Minister coming down and intervening to protect these poor miserable creatures, who had not the cash to brief a lawyer to go to the Court of Appeal, but any one who knew anything about it, knew that licensed victuallers had enough cash to brief lawyers in any action; in fact it was well known amongst lawyers that they preferred a brief from a licensed victualler to one from a teetotaler, because it was a much fatter one. The Prime Minister, he contended, ought to have left the law to take its ordinary course. The Prime Minister talked as if last year were the first time the magistrates had ever refused to grant renewals. The right hon. Gentleman said, "Here is a new departure."

MR. GALLOWAY (Manchester, S.W.): So it was.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said it was perfectly true that in some districts it was a new departure, but that was because the law was not put in operation in those districts. In Liverpool itself, in the course of twelve years—he did not think anybody would denounce the bench of magistrates in that city as Radical or teetotal, it was strongly Conservative, there might be some teetotalers, but they were in a considerable minority; at any rate the chairman was a strong Conservative—in the course of twelve years, from 1890 down to last year, they reduced the licences by 339. Where was the new departure there? Throughout the kingdom, the reduction in the course of nineteen years was 1,063. That was a considerable reduction, and proved that it was proceeding at a much more rapid rate in some places than in others. The reason was that where the reduction had been considerable public houses were much thicker. They were in the proportion of one to 150, or 200, or 300, of the population, and it was necessary that the reduction should proceed at a more rapid rate than in other districts. It simply showed that the magistrates in other districts, for one reason or another, had become alive to their powers, and began to exercise them, as they did from time to time. Magistrates discovered points in the law they were never aware of before, and we were constantly finding as to licensing, public health, or education that there was a sudden renewal of activity on the part of the bench of magistrates. In the case of the administration of the licensing law in particular districts, when they found the Prime Minister saying that it was a new departure, it showed that he did not grasp, not the local circumstances, but the general conditions of licensing administration throughout the country Even at the Courts last year most of the reductions were due not to judicial decisions by the magistrates, but to voluntary surrenders on the part of brewers themselves. Did the Prime Minister include these voluntary surrenders in his general condemnation?

He should like to put another point to the Prime Minister. It was a serious interference with the administration of law. [Laughter.] Hon. Members opposite might laugh, but this would constitute a precedent. The hon. Member for South West Manchester was exceedingly scornful at the notion that there should be any interference with the licensing laws. There would be difficulties in regard to the administration of other laws. Was the Prime Minister going to lay it down as a general principle that when the law pressed hard on individuals, it was not to be administered until there was an amendment of it which he considered would bring it up to his notion of justice? If that was really the principle on which the law was administered, let them have it all round. Don't let them have it only for licensed victuallers, let them have it for Nonconformists as well. If that was the general understanding, he had not a word more to say. Was it the principle the Prime Minister was laying down on behalf of the executive Government? The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "I do not say that the magistrates are wrong in their interpretation of the law. What I say is that they have administered the law in such a way that it has borne hardly on a considerable number of individuals."

Then he talked vaguely about compensation. That was all right, but amend your law. But was that the principle? He was only asking for advice. Perhaps the Prime Minister would counsel him as he had counselled the magistrates. There was another law which he thought bore very harshly on considerable numbers of the community. He and his friends thought it ought to be amended. Was it the Prime Minister's advice that if the administration of the law was harsh, if carried out, therefore it was right that they should suspend the administration of that law until they got it reformed and redressed by Parliament? [MINISTERIAL cheers.] He was very glad to get assent from hon. Members opposite. It would be of the greatest possible value to them when they came to consider other questions. What he wanted to say was that he put the rights of conscience as high as the rights of property, and therefore the advice of the Prime Minister he thought would be applicable all round and to that extent it was exceedingly important. The right hon. Gentleman was once responsible for the Government of Ireland, and he remembered perfectly well how he treated speeches of that character, attacking the resident magistrates upon the action of the law in that country. Contempt of Court! There was no rusty machine in the whole arsenal of Dublin Castle that he did not bring into operation against those who ventured to criticise the action of the removable magistrates—not magistrates like those in this country with some sort of independence, but magistrates who were simply officials of the Government. But the right hon. Gentleman could not tolerate criticism upon the action of the law. Now, was it to be one law for the Prime Minister and another for Irish Members? Was it to be one law for Ireland and another for licensed victuallers in this country? The whole basis of administration was that there should be perfect equality, and that Irishmen should be treated exactly like Scotchmen or

Englishmen. If that was so, the Prime Minister ought really to be eating bread and skilly at the present moment; and he ought to be serving his three months. Really that was the way in which he treated Irish Members, who perhaps in a more unreserved fashion attacked the administration of the law in Ireland and attacked it not whilst judicial decisions were *sub judice*, but after they were done with and when people saw that it was a question of putting their friends in prison for two, three, or four months with hard labour, so that every loyal man would necessarily feel considerably sore with the action of the magistrates on a great political issue. In this case, the action of the Prime Minister was purely for electioneering purposes. He did not suppose that the Prime Minister for a moment would deny that. At Rye the publicans said—"You are treating us very badly with your licensing act."

MR. GALLOWAY: You say that.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that was what the Rye publicans stated—"You are treating us very unfairly." At any rate, the publicans at Rye very considerably supported the Liberal candidate. He took that from the hon. Member for South West Manchester who knew more about publicans than he did himself. Then there was a deputation to the Prime Minister, and there was no doubt it was pointed out what would really happen to the Government. The Prime Minister said—"You have been treated scandalously by these magistrates, and I hope that the Quarter Sessions will reverse their extravagant decisions." That might be the case, but was it right to make an appeal to a Court of that kind without evidence—to make a general appeal to political passion and prejudice to decide on purely political considerations matters which were matters of evidence? What happened afterwards? The speech of the Prime Minister had given the word and it went round to Chertsey, "You are to vote for the Conservative candidate there." It was pure electioneering, and the administration of the law in the Courts of Justice in this country was to be reduced to pure electioneering. And this was from the party of law and order in this country. Sometimes the labour representatives were exceedingly sore about the decisions given in the High Courts. He was not going to criticise them one way or another. Supposing that a labour representative, where a case was on the way to the Court of Appeal or to the House of Lords, were to make a speech in which he denounced the inferior Court, and were to appeal to the higher Court to reverse the decision in the interest of public policy, the hon. Member knew what would happen. The labour representative—and very properly—would be imprisoned for contempt of court. Was there really one law for the labour man and another for the Prime Minister, because that was what it came to? Here were the magistrates, under very difficult conditions, administering a very important public duty. He had himself very often felt that the magistrates were leaning too much to one side or the other, but at any rate he had never heard public criticism of the action of the magistrates while a case was on the way to Quarter Sessions. They had a very important duty to perform, and had to have regard for the requirements of the neighbourhood. Lord Halsbury himself said that they should simply exercise their discretion with regard to what was necessary for the neighbourhood. If they thought that 200 licensed houses were too many, and that they contributed to drunkenness and disorder in the district it was their duty to reduce the number of licences if in their opinion that would contribute to the improvement of the neighbourhood. They had no right to check that duty or to consider the interests of anyone; the public interest should be first. Whether afterwards the Government should provide some compensation was a different matter. It was not, however, a matter which the magistrates were entitled to consider for a moment. Their business was to administer the law as a judicial bench. At any rate, it was not a question of compensation, it was purely a question as to whether the magistrates should be told that they ought not to perform their duties, although meantime convictions [for drunkenness and disorder were to continue, in order to help the Government in a few by-elections.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Gentleman has raised something in the nature of a direct personal attack on myself, and that must be my excuse for trespassing again, and for asking the House to permit me to intervene once more in the debate this afternoon. The hon. Gentleman complained that I made a speech the other day to a deputation which came to me on the subject of the recent alteration of the policy pursued by a large number of licensing magistrates. The hon. Gentleman thinks that I have committed a grave dereliction of duty in breaking silence. He thinks I ought not to have said anything at all. I presume he thinks I ought not to have received the deputation.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I said that while the cases were *sub judice* no comments at all ought to be made.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: That is to say I ought to have maintained silence. Why, I could hardly speak without commenting. If I were to speak and to comment, I am sure the hon. Gentleman, ardent as he is in the case of the magistrates in this matter, would hardly suggest that I should express opinions which do not happen to be my own. The hon. Gentleman further said that this gross act of impropriety, as he has been pleased to describe it, could have no other motive than an electioneering motive. I do not think much is gained by attributing motives; and I do not know that hon. Gentlemen opposite have any special qualifications, either by natural or acquired insight, for knowing better than I do myself what were the motives which actuated me. I can tell them that the opinions I expressed to that deputation have always been my opinions; and I have never for one moment hesitated to give public expression to them. It is perfectly true that there was a certain novelty on the occasion on which I expressed them, because the magistrates had never before taken the particular course which they have seen fit to take lately—at any rate never to the same extent.

I have always maintained, if you take away licences on a great scale from persons who have never offended against the law, and whose conduct is perfectly orderly, that it should be accompanied by compensation. That has been a publicly announced part of the creed and belief of the great majority of those with whom I habitually act in politics. It is open to any one to say that when a Minister gives expression to opinions which are common to him and his Party, he is electioneering. I suppose, in the same way, the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down was making an electioneering speech. I understand that the views he expresses are those which commend themselves to the political organisation of which he is an ornament; but I do not accuse him of corrupt motives in what he has done. I do not think he is actuated by personal malevolence. I attribute no motive at all. Let him treat me with the same consideration; and let us argue this question as it ought to be argued, without the attribution, on one side or the other, of interested motives. What is the whole point and substance of the hon. Gentleman's charge? It is this—that I have interfered with a Court of law in the exercise of its legal functions; and that my conduct ought to be compared in its impropriety with the impropriety of one who in public, after a civil case has been decided by a Court of first instance on strictly legal grounds, denounces that Court, and says that it ought to have been actuated by a policy very different to that which did animate it—it may be not only doing some injury to the Court of first instance, but prejudicing the decision to which the Court of Appeal might come. That is to what my conduct has been likened. The hon. Gentleman is entirely mistaken. There is no such parallel between the course I have pursued and the course of the imaginary critic of judicial proceedings which he has supposed. In the first place, the hon. Gentleman said that these magistrates do not sit as a Court. That has been laid down. [AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear!]

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid): The reason for that interruption is that in the Scottish Licensing Bill you now call it a Licensing Court.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not know whether it was the hon. Gentleman who made that loud and inarticulate interruption just now. I will not quarrel with the hon. Gentleman on the point, least of all on a point of law; nor should I have ventured on this ticklish ground had I not felt I had the authority of the House of Lords itself behind me, which I place, though in doubt, even in front of the hon. Gentleman himself. I observe that they laid down that licensing justices do not sit as a Court.

Mr. CALDWELL: Hear, hear. I agree.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: If the hon. Gentleman and the House of Lords are at one, then I am on absolutely secure ground. I proceed then with a perfectly happy and equable mind to point out to the House that this really disposes of the whole contention of the hon. Gentleman. His whole point was that I was interfering with a Court. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lanark, the House of Lords, and I are agreed that they do not sit as a Court. In that case, where is the contention of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Burghs? He has found an enemy in his own house. Not only do the magistrates not sit as a Court, but I venture to ask the common sense of the House whether they can, in the exercise of their duties at Brewster Sessions, be said to be doing other than acting in an administrative capacity. They are acting administratively, and they may act administratively wisely or unwisely. A judge in a court of law is acting according to the law, or he is not acting according to the law, and he is judged according as he is carrying out the law laid down by Parliament or not. When you are dealing with persons who, though magistrates, are not sitting as a Court, and when you are criticising them in respect of their administrative action, you have to consider the wisdom or unwisdom of their action. There is, therefore, no parallel whatever between the criticism which I, with all respect, ventured to pass upon this new policy of the magistrates, and the sort of criticism which the hon. Gentleman says was passed by Irish Members, for instance, upon the judicial action of this or that Irish judge. Am I, because it so happens I am in office, to be the only person in the country who is to be required to keep silence on this subject? The hon. Gentleman never would have hesitated to make a speech in favour of the new policy of the magistrates. He would probably say: "Here at last are people carrying out their duties. Here are magistrates who for 300 years have not known what their powers were; whose predecessors have been asleep in regard to this question. They have at last woke up, and they now know what they can and ought to do." The hon. Gentleman would not have thought that an improper interference with justice, but it is just as improper an interference with a court of justice, if the words are applicable at all, as anything I said was in a different sense and from the opposite side.

I think the hon. Gentleman has been extremely unreasonable in this matter. I think, and have always thought, that any large interference with these licences ought to be accompanied by compensation. I have thought so not merely—I had almost said not principally—but certainly not merely on account of the injury done to the publican himself. I hold in the strongest way that you cannot expect any trade to be properly conducted if you so arrange your proceedings that no man of substance or character will embark in that trade. That I believe to be sound temperance doctrine; and the more it is looked at, not in the light of this or that shibboleth, but in the light of the practical question we have all got to consider as Members of this House, the more I am convinced that you will come to the opinion at which I have arrived; namely, that any change of policy such as that which has been referred to, and which, among other of its consequences, has made it impossible for any publican to insure his licence in an assurance office in order to provide against this summary and unexpected action of the justices, is really not merely not to the interests of the class whom you tax on the property you take away from them; whom you tax for public purposes and local purposes; whom you require to spend large sums in improving houses from which you can take away licences without compensation six months afterwards; but that a policy of that sort cannot be a sound policy. If you choose to say that no spirits shall be drunk in this country at all, you may try and carry it out; but as long as you have a trade, it is your first duty to see that the members of that trade shall be men of character and respectability and substance; and for that reason I greatly deplore the policy which the magistrates have thought fit to pursue; and I have not the smallest pricking or remorse of conscience for anything I have said in the matter.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): The right hon. Gentleman has ingeniously contrived to mix up two questions which have really little connection with each other. My hon. friend who brought forward this question distinctly said that he did not wish, and would not take any steps, to bring before the House the question of compensation or no compensation, or the rights or grievances or misfortunes of publicans. Let us deal with that on the proper occasion. We shall be quite willing to do so. If the right hon. Gentleman, meeting this deputation, had told them that he thought that the present condition of affairs was very unfortunate, that the magistrates were hampered in their action by the absence of any provision to meet the hardship put upon individuals, if he had said that the Government, when they had time from other things would attempt to legislate upon the subject, no one would have said a word about it. We might have differed from him entirely; or we might have agreed with him; but that is not the point. The point is this, that the right hon. Gentleman, instead of making any promises or merely expressing his personal opinion, or the opinion of the Government, proceeded to condemn the action of public officials acting in a judicial manner, which action was still subject to appeal; and that he, knowing nothing whatever, making no pretence to know anything, about the circumstances of the case, said that these public officials were wrong, that they had come to a wrong conclusion, and taken wrong action, and that he hoped their decision would be reversed. The right hon. Gentleman raises a little point whether it is a Court, or whether it is not a Court. He himself in his Scottish Licensing Bill of this year calls it a Court. It has always been known, I believe, as a licensing authority. That would not satisfy the Solicitor-General for Scotland, and the other Scottish advisers of the right hon. Gentleman. They must needs call this authority a Court. We have nothing to do with that although it is rather an awkward fact for the right hon. Gentleman to get over. But supposing it is not technically a Court, according to the ordinary language used with regard to a Court, here is Lord Halsbury's opinion:—

> "An extensive power is confided to justices in their capacity as justices, to be exercised judicially."

The right hon. Gentleman constituted himself a sort of Court of Appeal. Did he exercise his power judicially? He did not know a single word of the evidence taken before these Courts. He did not know the rights and the wrongs of the case in any particular; and yet to please this deputation he said the justices were wrong and that he hoped their decision would be reversed. That is the offence we think the right hon. Gentleman has committed. Then he says "Any of you might have done the same thing"; he says my hon. friend might have spoken strongly either in defence of or in opposition to the action of the magistrates. Yes, but unfortunately the man in the street, like my hon. friend, is not quite the same thing as the Chief Executive Officer of the Government of this country—the head of the Government of which the Lord Chancellor is a Member, who is over the justices of the kingdom. The right hon. Gentleman when he gets among these friends of his and wishes to cultivate their favour, cannot divest himself of the responsibility attaching to him as Prime Minister of this country—chiefly responsible above all men for the maintenance of law and order. Certain duties are given to the magistrates. They are to exercise them judicially. What does that mean? They are to hear evidence, to inquire into the circumstances of the locality, and to make sure of all the facts of the case before they come to a decision. In all cases their decision has been subject to appeal, but by your legislation of last year you have actually facilitated that appeal. You have given them power in regard to costs by a clause in the Act of last year, and that, of course, facilitates appeals, and brings the procedure more into line with the ordinary judicial forms and procedure to which we are accustomed. But the right hon. Gentleman calmly comes forward to this deputation, and pronounces *ex cathedra* that the justices were wrong and that he hopes their decision will be reversed.

He says we must not inquire into his motives. Well, no, we do not attribute any motives, but it was, I suppose, a strange and undesigned coincidence. It just happened that this deputation came forward at a time when there was a great ferment among the Members of what calls itself the Trade with regard to this matter and other matters, and the whole question of compensation, and there were a good many by-elections going on, and the right hon. Gentleman made this speech. It is a case of those inexplicable circumstances, coincident in time, which we often meet with in private life. We have talked or thought of a man who had been out of our mind for years, and we go out in the street and the first person we meet is that man. But that is an undesigned coincidence, and we must accordingly relegate this incident also to that category. It was altogether an accidental and haphazard circumstance that this deputation went to the right hon. Gentleman just at this moment. If the right hon. Gentleman had covered the deputation with his sympathy and with promises, we should have had nothing to say against him. It would have been ordinary business, perfectly intelligible business. Instead of that he goes out of his way to use this strange language in regard to public judicial officers exercising their duties to the best of their conscience and ability, and in that I agree with my hon. friend that he took a course which was unworthy of the position he occupies.

SIR FREDERICK BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had stated that the licensing magistrates had to exercise their functions judicially, but what had really taken place in many cases was that an arrangement had been arrived at beforehand between the justices and the brewers under which it had been agreed that if the brewers took out a certain number nothing further would be said.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said it was not those brewers who complained.

SIR FREDERICK BANBURY said that had nothing to do with the matter. A judge might arrive at a wrong decision and satisfy one of the parties, and it was open to anyone to say whether he thought that decision had been arrived at in a proper manner. He was present at the deputation and heard what his right hon. friend said, and he certainly thought that what his right hon. friend referred to chiefly was the extraordinary way in which these decisions had been arrived at. They had not been arrived at on the merits of the cases.

MR. BRYN ROBERTS (Carnarvonshire, Eifion) said it was true that the magistrates did not decide cases inter-party, but that they exercised judicial functions as administrators between the public on the one hand and the licensed victuallers on the other was not open to argument. The Prime Minister was, therefore, not entitled to bully or threaten or endeavour to terrify them. The right hon. Gentleman was the head of a Government of which the Lord Chancellor was a subordinate member. The Courts of Quarter Sessions which would review the decisions of the licensing magistrates were composed of justices removable by the Lord Chancellor; therefore when the Prime Minister made the statement that the magistrates in Quarter Sessions would act in a certain way, it was impossible to suggest that that was merely the expression of a political opinion. It was a definite opinion on a distinct act of administration performed by men subject indirectly to the influence of the Prime

Minister. It might be that many magistrates had gone rather far in refusing the renewal of licences. But whether they were right or wrong, the matter had to come before the Court of Quarter Sessions, and the latter ought to be in a position to address themselves to it with unbiassed, unprejudiced, and independent minds. He contended that the action of the Prime Minister prevented the exercise of that independent judgment by the Court of Quarter Sessions. He was not sure that the right hon. Gentleman's statement would cause the Courts of Quarter Sessions to act as he wished, for there was nothing persons occupied judicially were more disposed to resent than any attempt to bully them as to the decisions they should give. It was to a great extent the fault of the Government that this difficulty had arisen. Everybody must recognise that there was a considerable amount of hardship in the present condition of things, and some change in the law was necessary. The necessity of reducing the licences in the public interest was apparent. Whether it should be done with or without compensation was a matter for the Government. The magistrates had stayed their hand for years, but the Government had not moved. Years ago, in Sharpe *v.* Wakefield, the right of magistrates was established. They might have thought it reasonable that the Legislature should have the opportunity of making some provision with respect to the injustice that might arise from the wholesale refusal of licences, but the Government, though they had been in power for several years, had done nothing. Were the magistrates permanently to neglect their duty because the Government did not take any steps? To visit upon the magistrates the condemnation due to the Government for leaving the question unsettled was unreasonable, and would tend to affect very injuriously the interests of justice—the interests of the publicans as well as the interests of the country at large—in the consideration of the cases that would come before the Quarter Sessions this week.

SIR FORTESCUE FLANNERY (Yorkshire, Shipley) said he could not allow the debate to terminate without a protest against the very strong language used by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition. There was not a man on the Conservative side of the House who did not believe that the speech of his right hon. friend was entirely justified. The allegation of the hon. Member for Carnarvon Burghs was that while the case was *sub judice* his right hon. friend expressed an opinion upon it. When any person in public made a statement about a case which was *sub judice*, he was undoubtedly doing something which might prejudice the judicial decision in that case, but if that person made a statement as to the principle underlying a large number of cases, without referring to any particular case, he submitted that that could not prejudice the decision arrived at in any particular case. In the speech referred to, what the Prime Minister said was that the magistrates had initiated a new policy, which he hoped would be overturned, but as the right hon. Gentleman did not name any particular case which was *sub judice*, he did not transgress either the usual custom in such cases, or public taste, or interfere with the administration of justice. This question had aroused immense public interest, and it could not be too emphatically stated that under the new Licensing Act the magistrates had neither less nor more power than before. If magistrates were influenced in the direction of destroying licences and vested interests which they themselves had assisted to create, it was right that not only a Member of the House, but even an official in the highest public position, should pronounce his opinion on a great public question without reference to any particular case.

MR. AUSTIN TAYLOR (Liverpool, East Toxteth) did not propose to enter into the question of the propriety or impropriety of the observations of the Leader of the House, but if it was open to the right hon. Gentleman to express his opinion on the actions of the magistrates, it was equally open to any Member of the House to do so. As to the Liverpool magistrates, they had considerable justification for the action they had taken in reducing the number of licences. There had been considerable demolitions of property of an insanitary character, but under the local Acts the public houses could not be touched. The municipality were powerless to deal with the question, and it had come before the magistrates for the exercise of their judicial discretion. He did not say that their policy was above criticism, but he could not allow anything like a sweeping condemnation of their action to pass without comment.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have not attacked them.

Mr. AUSTIN TAYLOR said he acquitted the right hon. Gentleman of any such attack, but reference had been made to the Liverpool magistrates, and he thought it right to put the case clearly before the House. The demolition of property in Liverpool had brought about a condition of things——

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot see how the hon. Member will be in order in discussing the action of the magistrates of Liverpool in reference to the exercise of powers under a certain Act of Parliament. The magistrates are not under the control of the Government in any way. Such a question cannot be discussed on a Motion for Adjournment. Moreover, the hon. Member cannot discuss the question without anticipating the debate on a Bill which is before the House.

Mr. AUSTIN TAYLOR said the magistrates had simply acted in their judicial capacity, and he was merely illustrating the difficulties with which they had to contend in the exercise of their discretion, owing to the rightful action of the municipality in clearing insanitary areas. In considering the question the House should remember that not merely in Liverpool but elsewhere, the magistrates had been brought face to face with serious social conditions which had prompted them to take the course they had adopted, without the least desire to act unjustly in regard to any rights of property. The old maxim, "*Summum jus, summa injuria,*" might very well be applied in this case, and he hoped the example of Liverpool would be no inducement to licensing justices to act in any other than a judicial capacity with due respect to the rights of property. In all that the Liverpool justices had done they had been actuated by the desire to meet pressing social conditions of a character of which only those who lived in large and over-crowded municipalities had any cognisance.

Question put, and agreed to.

Adjourned at three minutes before Five o'clock till Tuesday, 21st April.

[APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.

ESTIMATES FOR CIVIL SERVICES

AND

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS,

1903–4.

MEMORANDUM BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY.

I.—CIVIL SERVICES.

1. The Estimates for Civil Services, 1903–4, amount to a net total of 26,561,033*l.* The net total of the original Estimates for 1902–3 was 26,448,145*l.* These figures show an increase for 1903–4 of 112,888*l.* But it has to be remembered that the original Estimates for 1902–3 included a special grant of 1,800,000*l.* in aid of the revenues of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, and that no corresponding provision is required in 1903–4. If that exceptional service be excluded from last year's Estimates, the increase of the Estimates for 1903–4 over those for 1902–3 amounts to 1,912,888*l.* This increase arises mainly on Class IV. (Education, Science and Art), provision being made in that Class for a half-year's payments, on account of the new Grant for Education in England and Wales under the Act of last Session, and also for a half-year's payment of an additional Aid Grant for Scottish Education. The total increase in cost of the Services included in Class IV. amounts to 1,494,137*l.*; and it follows that the total net increase on the other Classes of the Civil Service Estimates excluding the special grant is 418,751*l.*

2. In the Abstract and throughout the detailed Estimates, comparison is made, according to the usual practice, between the amount of the Estimates for 1903–4 and the total amount of the grants for 1902–3 which were voted by Parliament in the Session of 1902 and included in the annual Appropriation Act. Thus the figures for 1902–3 comprise, besides the original Estimates of the year, Supplementary Estimates amounting to a total of 489,076*l.*, which were voted in the summer of 1902.* Certain minor adjustments have also been made, as explained in the note appended to the Abstract, resulting in a total of 26,939,738*l.*, or (again excluding the grant of 1,800,000*l.* to the South African Colonies) a total of 25,139,738*l.*, as being the amount voted in 1902. On the latter basis of comparison, the Estimates for 1903–4 show an increase over the amount voted for the present year of 1,421,295*l.*

3. The number of Votes is 104, or one less than the original number for the present year. The Vote for the Privy Seal Office is no longer required, and other services for which provision was made in separate Votes in 1902–3 (the Cretan Loan and the Coronation of His Majesty) disappear. On the other hand, an additional Vote appears in Class VI. for the Trustee Savings Banks and Friendly Societies Deficiencies of 1902. No Vote was taken for this service in 1902–3, as the Deficiencies of the year 1901 had been made good by a Supplementary Vote at the close of 1901–2. A new Vote is also added in Class VII. to provide for a Grant in Aid of the Expenses of the Royal Commission for the St. Louis Exhibition, 1904.

CLASS I.

4. The total sum required for Public Works and Buildings is 2,557,712*l.*, or 265,699*l.* more than the amount voted in 1902. As the Votes taken last year included Supplementary Estimates amounting to 51,800*l.*, the actual increase over the original

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* The vote of 8,000,000*l.* which was taken in the Autumn Sitting of 1902 for a further Grant in Aid of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, was an exceptional grant for a non-recurrent service, and was not included in the general Appropriation Act of the Session. Hence it is not taken into account in the comparison.

Estimates for 1902–3 is 317,499*l.* The Estimate for Royal Palaces, although relieved of the provision of 10,000*l.* which was required this year for Special Works at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, still shows an increase of 7,800*l.*, which is attributable to the inclusion of a sum of 19,000*l.* (net) for Osborne House and Gardens.

A sum of 6,192*l.* is included in the Estimate for Holyrood Palace, chiefly under the head of maintenance and repairs. In view of its altered status, Marlborough House is no longer distinguished from other Palaces in the title or the general arrangement of this Vote. At one time Marlborough House was the subject of a separate Vote, and after that Vote had been merged with the general Vote for Palaces, the provision for Marlborough House was still kept apart in special subheads. That arrangement has been continued up to the present year, but for the future Marlborough House will be provided for in the general subheads of the Vote, as one of the Palaces not in the occupation of His Majesty. Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens have been relieved of 18,476*l.* (net), representing the cost of the Director of Kew Gardens and his Establishment, who will be transferred, from 1st April, 1903, from the Office of Works to the Board of Agriculture, under the provisions of Section 4 of the Board of Agriculture Act, 1889 (52 and 53 Vic. c. 30).

Houses of Parliament Buildings show a net decrease of 6,200*l.* in consequence of the completion of the special works and alterations for which provision was made in the Votes for 1902–3.

Art and Science Buildings include an item of 10,000*l.* on account of the erection of a store at Hendon for Newspapers, etc., to be transferred from the British Museum. The sum of 3,000*l.* was provided in the Votes for 1902–3 for the purchase of the site of this building.

Provision is made in the Estimate for Diplomatic and Consular Buildings for the completion of the new Consular Buildings at Alexandria, and for an instalment of the cost of the erection of Quarters for Student Interpreters at Peking.

The increase on the Vote for Revenue Buildings from 371,000*l.* to 564,000*l.* will enable the Office of Works to take in hand a large number of Postal and Telegraph Buildings urgently required by the Postmaster-General, the execution of which has been postponed owing to financial exigencies. 185,470*l.* is provided for 80 proposed New Works as compared with 19,000*l.* for 16 New Works in 1902–3. Similar reasons explain the large increase (14,770*l.*) in the provision for New Works in the Vote for Miscellaneous Legal Buildings.

The Estimate for Public Buildings, Great Britain, shows a net increase of 17,613*l.*, the principal new works proposed to be undertaken being Mercantile Marine Offices at the Albert Dock, estimated to cost 8,500*l.* in all, and structural alterations at the Royal Mint, to provide increased boiler accommodation, estimated to cost 12,000*l.*, of which 5.000*l.* is provided for this year. 2,000*l.* is also provided for a sea wall to protect St. Andrews Castle. A sum of 20,900*l.* is inserted to complete the purchase of the properties adjoining the National Gallery, and 1,900*l.* to complete the provision of the additional accommodation at the Ordnance Survey Offices, Southampton.

Services in respect of Buildings at the Tower of London and Edinburgh Castle, involving an annual expenditure of 4,087*l.* net, have been transferred from Army Votes.

In the Estimates for Harbours under the Board of Trade, provision is made for the first moiety of a Grant of 15,000*l.* towards the cost of repairs of the Balaclava Breakwater at Fraserburgh Harbour. The total cost of repairing the breakwater has been estimated, after enquiry by an engineering expert, at 24,000*l.* Of this amount 4,000*l.* will be provided locally, and the Fishery Board for Scotland have made a Grant of 5,000*l.* Of the net increase of 33,439*l.* in the Rates Estimate, 21,000*l.* is attributable to increased poundage in the United Kingdom. The Estimate for Railways, Ireland, shows a net reduction of 18,588*l.*, owing to the termination of an Annuity of 18,659*l.*, in repayment of advances by the National Debt Commissioners under the Light Railways (Ireland) Acts, 1889 and 1893.

CLASS II.

5. The Salaries and Expenses of Civil Departments are estimated at a net total of 2,589,692*l.*, being a net decrease of 31,972*l.* A transfer from Vote 12 of this Class (Charity Commission) to Class IV., Vote 1 (Board of Education), of a sum of 3,036*l.* has been made in respect of staff, etc., dealing with Endowed Schools. The cost of the staff at Kew Gardens has been transferred to the Board of Agriculture, as stated above, and provision amounting to 3,000*l.* is also made in the Estimate for that Department for collecting Returns of Agricultural Prices. The Estimate for the Office of Woods has been relieved of a charge of 1,362*l.* in respect of the Salaries and Expenses of the Office of Land Revenue Records and Inrolments, which have been transferred to the Public Record Office. There is a reduction of 20,000*l.* owing to the cessation of expenditure in connection with the 1901 Census. There is also a reduction of nearly 69,000*l.* on the Stationery Office Estimate: 18,000*l.* of this is only an apparent reduction owing to a new arrangement under which receipts from advertisements in the Gazette will be paid in cash instead of in stamps and therefore appropriated in aid of the Vote: the remainder of the reduction, however, is real and is caused mainly by the cessation of war requirements.

In the House of Commons Estimate 1,000*l.* is provided for the salary of the Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means. The Board of Trade requirements show an estimated increase of 16,930*l.*, nearly 11,000*l.* of which is caused by the increase in the Patent Office consequent on the Patent Act, 1902. An increase of 9,500*l.* in the Revenue from Patent Stamps is, however, also anticipated.

The other principal increase in this Class is the addition to the Vote for the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) of over 23,000*l.* This is mainly due to Educational requirements.

The estimate for the receipts from seignorage on silver coins and profit on bronze coinage for the current year was 800,000*l.*, but it is feared that this estimate will not be realised. For 1903–4 the seignorage on silver coins is put at 300,000*l.*, which with the profits on the bronze coinage and miscellaneous receipts will make the total receipts 400,000*l.* Of this 281,300*l.* will be paid into the Exchequer as extra receipts, and 118,700*l.* will be appropriated in aid of the Vote.

CLASS III.

6. The Estimates under the head of Law and Justice amount to a total of 3,939,597*l.*, or 76,806*l.* more than in the current year.

The principal increases are under Prisons (England and the Colonies), 54,968*l.*, and Royal Irish Constabulary, 22,817*l.* The former is due largely to the increased cost of victualling under the new dietary, and of supplies generally; the latter mainly to improvements of the scales of lodging and other allowances granted to the force in accordance with the recommendations of the recent Departmental Committee [Cd. 1087]. The same reasons explain a portion of the increase of 6,051*l.* under Dublin Metropolitan Police. The Estimate for the Land Registry includes 6,000*l.* for Examination of Absolute Title as against 1,000*l.* this year. The expenditure of this sum is contingent upon the service being required of the department by the public, in which case the cost will be recouped by the fees chargeable. Prisons (Ireland) would have shown a decrease owing to economies effected by the assimilation of Establishments of Convict and Local Prisons but for the new charge of 8,000*l.* for maintenance of Criminal Lunatics in District Asylums which now becomes payable under the Lunacy (Ireland) Act, 1901.

CLASS IV.

7. The provision necessary for Education, Science, and Art is estimated at a total of 14,531,824*l.*, being an increase of, 1,494,137*l.* over the total grants for 1902–3.

Educational Services in England and Scotland account for most of the extra expenditure. Taking first the Board of Education, England and Wales, the increase on the original Estimate for 1902–3 is 1,327,944*l.*

This increase is mainly due to the operation of the Education Act, 1902. When the Act is in full working, it is anticipated that the annual charge in respect of Grants under it will amount to 2,200,000*l.* : but the School Board Grants (315,000*l.*) and the Voluntary School Grants (say 636,500*l.*) will disappear—so that the net additional charge for Grants on the Vote in future years will be about 1,248,500*l.* In the Estimates for 1903–4 provision of 1,100,000*l.* is made in respect of half a year's working of the Act under the sub-head for Aid Grants in respect of Elementary Education (the total increase on which is 793,077*l.*) but only 318,277*l.*, or about half the provision which would otherwise have been required, is inserted in respect of Voluntary School Grants. The net additional charge on these Estimates may therefore be taken at about 781,000*l.*

Another cause of the large increase on the Vote is the anticipated growth in the number of scholars in average attendance, to meet which additional provision of 179,134*l.* is made for Annual Grants for Public Elementary Schools, and 131,670*l.* for Fee Grants. In addition, from the same cause, and also because there has been a general increase in the School Board Rate in districts receiving the Grants, the subhead for grants to School Boards has been increased by 97,500*l.*

The subheads relating to Training of Teachers, etc., require an additional 103,782*l.* A saving of about 40,000*l.* has, however, been effected by an alteration in the sections of the Code under which deficiencies of Grants were made good in certain cases. Part of this saving has been diverted to meet the estimated extra cost of the training of Teachers and part (13,000*l.*) is devoted as a lump sum under Subhead A of the Vote to provide for the extra cost (which cannot yet be accurately estimated) of administering the new Act.

As stated above, the work connected with Endowed Schools has been transferred from the Charity Commission to the Board of Education, and the Education Vote is charged with the sum of 3,036*l.* accordingly.

Under the British Museum Vote an item of 200*l.* appears which represents the salary of the Curator of the Tower Armouries—a charge transferred from Army Votes.

Under Scientific Investigation a saving of 22,616*l.* is shown as compared with 1902–3, provision being no longer made for the National Antarctic Expedition nor for the equipment of Bushy House as a National Physical Laboratory.

Public Education, Scotland, shows an increase of 151,116*l.* Part of this (28,648*l.*) is due to the growth of average attendance as shown in the present year, and as anticipated; part (11,500*l.*) to the growth of Continuation Classes, and part (106,000*l.*) is inserted in a new subhead as a "General Grant-in-Aid" (half-year's Grant) to Scotland corresponding to the new grant under the English Education Act, 1902.* Of the increase of 41,358*l.* in the Estimate for Public Education, Ireland, 35,000*l.* is caused by the payment due in 1903–4 of the Triennial Grants of Continued Good Service Salary to Teachers. The system of Book Stores has been abolished, with a consequent decrease of 31,031*l.* expenditure, and of 31,500*l.* in the Appropriations in Aid formerly realised by the Sale of Books, Apparatus, etc. Under the National Gallery, Ireland, Vote, a sum of 700*l.* has been inserted to meet the expenses of the transfer to the Gallery of the Collection given by the Countess of Milltown.

CLASS V.

8. This Class shows a net decrease on the original Estimates for 1902–3 of 1,734,941*l.*, principally owing to the disappearance of the special item of 1,800,000*l.* for South African Constabulary, the final Imperial contribution to this service having been made by a Supplementary Estimate of 1,000,000*l.* voted this year. The increase of 7,210*l.* under Diplomatic and Consular Services arises mainly under Telegrams, the provision of 1902–3 having proved insufficient. British Protectorates require 50,500*l.* more. Of this, 25,000*l.* is for Somaliland, due to the necessity of providing

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* Parliament will be asked to make a grant of a similar nature to Ireland, but it is proposed that it should be issued direct from the Consolidated Fund under powers conferred by a special Act, instead of being placed on the Estimates.

for repayment to India of the cost of buildings taken over on the transfer of the Protectorate in 1898. The cost of the present military operations is being borne upon Army Funds. Further annuities, amounting to 20,500*l.*, are provided for repayment of capital expenditure upon the Uganda Railway, the amount borrowed from the National Debt Commissioners in 1902 having been 330,000*l.* The British East Africa Grant includes 5,000*l.* for Agricultural Experiments, and provision has again been made for deficiency in working the Uganda Railway and for the completion of the Steamers on Lake Victoria. Besides the disappearance of the item of 1,800,000*l.* for South African Constabulary, the following decreases appear in the Grants in Aid of the Local Revenues of the following Colonies:—Gold Coast (Northern Territories) 5,000*l.*; West Indian Islands, 13,000*l.*; Bechuanaland, 24,000*l.*; and Wei-hai-Wei, 3,000*l.* On the other hand, 115,000*l.* more is asked for Northern Nigeria to meet the need for additional military forces, political officers, public works and telegraphs. The Grants in the session of 1902 included a Supplementary Vote of 250,000*l.* for the West Indian Sugar Industry. Including this, the net decrease under Colonial Services is 1,848,526*l.* 87,000*l.* is inserted as a Grant in Aid of Cyprus, as against 30,000*l.* this year. The increase is rendered necessary by deficiency of revenue, due to the drought and to the measures required to combat the prevailing distress. A part of this sum represents revenue, the collection of which is only temporarily postponed. This revenue will be received in 1903–4 and the following year, reducing the deficits to be voted in respect of these years. The Estimate for Telegragh Subsidies and Pacific Cable is less by 111,125*l.* The Grant in Aid of the Pacific Cable shows a decrease of 25,000*l.* owing to the fact that the earnings of the Cable during the year are expected to amount to 73,000*l.*, while the credit subhead is increased by 85,000*l.* on account of the estimated receipts from Colonial Contributions in respect of the expenses met out of the Vote for 1902–3.

CLASS VI.

9. In this Class is included a Vote of 48,619*l.* to make good deficiencies on the Income Accounts of the Funds for Trustee Savings Banks and Friendly Societies for the year ended the 20th of November, 1902 (40 and 41 Vict. c. 13, ss. 15 and 16). The corresponding deficiencies on the Accounts for the year to the 20th of November, 1901 (amounting to 48,941*l.*), were voted on a Supplementary Estimate at the close of the financial year 1901–2. This Vote, together with an increase of 10,964*l.* in the Estimate for Superannuation and Retired Allowances, accounts for the increase on the Class (58,781*l.*), the other votes showing as usual small decreases.

CLASS VII.

10. This Class exhibits a net decrease of 99,215*l.* on the Total of Original and Supplementary Estimates in 1902. The Supplementary Estimates included an additional 25,000*l.* (making 125,000*l.* in all) for the Coronation, and 4,276*l.* for Repayments to the Civil Contingencies Fund, for which latter service an Estimate will be presented later, so far as may be necessary. The Vote for Temporary Commissions continues to increase, three new Commissions (Alien Immigration, South African War, and London Locomotion) having been appointed.

As in 1902–3 the Vote for repayments to the Local Loans Fund is presented as an original Estimate. The total which Parliament will be asked to vote (19,359*l.*) is identical with the amount written off the Assets of the Fund under the Public Works Loans Act, 1902.

A Vote of 30,000*l.* is added to the Class as a Grant in Aid of the expenses of the Royal Commission for the St. Louis Exhibition, 1904. If any further contribution be decided upon, it will be provided in the Estimates for subsequent years.

II.—REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

11. The net total of the Estimates for Revenue Departments is 18,517,220*l.*, an increase of 713,970*l.* over the adjusted total for 1902–3, which was 17,803,250*l.*, including a Supplementary Grant of 12,000*l.* for the Customs.

APPENDIX I.

A Supplementary Grant for the Customs Service was taken last Summer for the additional staff rendered necessary by the revival of the duty on Corn, etc.: but provision was only made for part of the year, whereas twelve months' provision for the extra staff is included in the Estimates for 1903–4. This fact accounts for the greater part of the increase of 8,500*l.* in the Customs Estimate. The increase of 53,730*l.* in the Inland Revenue Estimate is largely due to growth of ordinary establishment charges, and pensions. An increase of 14,000*l.* is, however, required for the completion of the Quinquennial Reassessment of Schedules A. and B. of the Income Tax. In this year 30,000*l.* was voted for this Service, and 44,000*l.* will be required in 1903–4. An additional 16,000*l.* is provided for Assessors and Collectors of Taxes.

12. For Post Office, Packet Services, and Telegraphs the total net provision required is 15,403,720*l.*, as compared with 14,751,980*l.*, showing an increase on the three services of 651,740*l.* The increase in the case of the Post Office is mainly caused by the expansion of the postal business, and is distributed throughout the Vote. The increased provision in the Packet Services Estimate under Subhead C. is chiefly due to the proposed establishment of a Parcel Post with America.

Telegraphs will cost 355,352*l.* more than in the present year. The continued extension of the Telegraph Service over the kingdom, involving expenditure both on staff and materials, and the growth of the Telephone System are the chief causes of this increase. In particular, a sum of 131,000*l.* has been inserted for the provision of further underground lines to the North.

The provision for superannuation and other Non-effective charges shows an increase of 19,040*l.* (from 410,960*l.* to 430,000*l.*): but owing to the rapid increase of the Postal Services the full burden imposed on the Exchequer by the pension system is not yet apparent in the Estimates.

W. H. Fisher.

2nd March, 1903.

APPENDIX II

PUBLIC BILLS

DEALT WITH IN VOLUME CXX.

Those marked thus * are Government Bills. The figures in parentheses in the last column refer to the page in this volume. "[H.L.]" following title indicates that the Bill originated in the Lords.

(A.) House of Lords.

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
*Consolidated Fund (No. 1)		Read 1^a Read 2^a Committee, Report Read 3^a and passed 26th March (287)
*Land Registers (Scotland) [H.L.]	*Lord Balfour of Burleigh*	Read 2^a 30th March (541)
Lunacy Acts Amendment (London) [H.L.]	*Earl Carrington*	Read 1^a 30th March (540)
*Marine Insurance [H.L.]	*Lord Chancellor*	Read 3^a and passed 26th March (280)
*Prevention of Corruption [H.L.]	*Lord Chancellor*	Report 26th March (280) Read 3^a and passed 27th March (407)
Prevention of Cruelty to Children Amendment [H.L.]	*Lord Alverstone*	Read 2^a 27th March (407)
Shops (Early Closing) [H.L.]	*Lord Avebury*	Report 27th March (407)
*Statute Law Revision (Scotland) [H.L.]	*Lord Chancellor*	Read 1^a 30th March (547)

(B.) House of Commons.

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
*Army Annual	*Mr. Brodrick*	Read 2^o 1st April (847) Committee Report 2nd April (998) Read 3^o and passed 6th April (1227)
*Berwickshire County Town	*Mr. A. Graham Murray*	Read 2^o 25th March (242) Committee Report Read 3^o and passed 31st March (735)

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
*Borough Funds	*Mr. Walter Long*	Read 2° 25th March (242)
British and Irish Meat Protection	*Mr. Alfred Davies*	Read 1° 7th April (1260)
Burgh Police (Scotland)	*Mr. Asher*	Read 1° 2nd April (623)
Cheap Trains	*Captain Norton*	Read 1° 7th April (1261)
Clubs Registration (Scotland)	*Mr. Cameron Corbett*	Read 1° 7th April (1261)
Coal Mines (Certificates)	*Mr. Samuel Evans*	Read 1° 31st March (694)
*Consolidated Fund (No. 1)	*Mr. Ritchie*	Read 2° 24th March (67) Committee Report 25th March (181) Read 3° and passed 26th March (404)
*Contracts (India Office)	*Lord George Hamilton*	Read 2° 31st March (734) Committee Report } 1st April Read 3° and passed } (859)
*County Councils (Bills in Parliament)	*Mr. Walter Long*	Second Reading (adjourned) 24th March (132) Read 2° 25th March (240)
Crofters Holdings (Scotland)	*Mr. Cathcart Wason*	Read 1° 7th April (1260)
Drunkenness and Registration of Clubs (Ireland)	*Mr. T. W. Russell*	Second Reading (defeated) 3rd April (1083)
Ecclesiastical Dilapidations	*Major Rasch*	Read 1° 7th April (590)
*Employment of Children	*Mr. Akers Douglas*	Read 2° 24th March (119)
Fisheries (Ireland) Acts Amendment	*Sir Henry Seton-Karr*	Read 1° 31st March (694)
Hall-Marking of Foreign Plate	*Mr. Samuel Roberts*	Bill Withdrawn 1st April (794)
Hall-Marking of Foreign Plate (No. 2)	*Mr. Samuel Roberts*	Read 1° 2nd April (924)
Highways	*Mr. Henry Hobhouse*	Read 1° 2nd April (924)
Innkeepers' Liability	*Sir Brampton Gurdon*	Reported from Standing Committee 31st March (694)
*Irish Land	*Mr. Wyndham*	Read 1° 25th March (181)
Land Values Assessment and Rating	*Dr. Macnamara*	Second Reading (defeated) 27th March (470)

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
Licences, Renewal and Transfer	*Sir William Hart Dyke*	Read 1° 7th April (1261)
*Licensing Acts Consolidation	*Mr. A. Graham Murray*	Read 2° 6th April (1223)
*Licensing (Scotland) Acts Amendment	*Mr. A. Graham Murray*	Read 2° 6th April (1133)
*London Education	*Sir William Anson*	Read 1° 7th April (1261)
*Marine Insurance [H.L.]	*Sir Robert Finlay*	Read 1° 30th March (585)
Merchant Shipping (Lighthouses)	*Mr. Charles McArthur*	Second Reading (defeated) 3rd April (1030)
Municipal Corporations (Audit)	*Major Seely*	Read 1° 6th April (1126)
*Naval Forces	*Mr. Arnold-Forster*	Committee Report 31st March (735) Read 3° and passed 1st April (861)
Out-door Relief (Pensioners)	*Colonel Blundell*	Read 2° 3rd April (1092)
Parliamentary Voters and Elections	*Mr. John Sinclair*	Read 1° 7th April (1260)
Parliamentary Voters' Registration	*Mr. Cremer*	Read 1° 6th April (1127)
Pharmacy	*Mr. Lough*	Read 1° 26th March (317)
Pistols	*Mr. Helme*	Read 2° 2nd April (1026)
Poor Prisoners Defence	*Mr. Bousfield*	Read 2° 26th March (404)
*Port of London	*Mr. Gerald Balfour*	Read 1° 6th April (1127)
*Post Office Sites	*Mr. Austen Chamberlain*	Read 1° 2nd April (924)
*Prevention of Corruption [H.L.]	*Sir Robert Finlay*	Read 1° 30th March (585)
Prevention of Cruelty to Wild Animals	*Mr. Corrie Grant*	Read 1° 31st March (694)
Public Houses (Hours of Closing) (Scotland)	*Sir John Stirling-Maxwell*	Second Reading (adjourned) 2nd April (1018)
*Railway (Electrical Power)	*Mr. Gerald Balfour*	Read 1° 7th April (1261)
*Sale of Adulterated Butter	*Mr. Hanbury*	Read 2° 31st March (696)

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
Salmon Fisheries (Ireland) Acts Amendment	*Sir Henry Seton-Karr*	Bill withdrawn 31st March (776)
*Sheep Scab	*Mr. Hanbury*	Read 1° 24th March (66) Read 2° 31st March (734)
Small Dwellings (Acquisition)	*Sir Thomas Wrightson*	Read 1° 26th March (317)
Sunday Trading (Scotland)	*Mr. Cameron Corbett*	Read 1° 7th April (1261)
Trawlers' Certificates Suspension	*Mr. Bignold*	Read 1° 6th April (1127)
Women's Disabilities (Removal)	*Colonel Denny*	Read 1° 25th March (181)

APPENDIX III.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, SESSION 1903.

List of Rules, Orders, &c., which have been presented during the Session, and are required by Statute to lie for an appointed number of Days upon the Table of the House.

[*In continuation of List given in previous volume.*]

Title of Paper.	Date from which the Period runs.	Period to lie upon the Table.
Universities (Scotland) Act, 1889 (Ordinance),—Copy of University Court Ordinance No. VII. (Aberdeen, No. 1) (Foundation of the Burnett-Fletcher Chair of History and Archæology in the University of Aberdeen) [52 and 53 Vic. c. 55, s. 20]	25 March	12 weeks
Cremation (England and Wales),—Copy of Regulations made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department under Section 7 of The Cremation Act, 1902, with reference to the Maintenance and Inspection of Crematoria, the condition under which Cremations may take place, &c. [2 Edw. VII. c. 8, s. 7]	1 April	40 days
Certified Day Industrial Schools (Parliamentary Grant),—Copy of Recommendation of the Secretary of State for the Home Department that the sum contributed out of moneys provided by Parliament to managers of any Certified Day Industrial Schools shall, under certain conditions, continue to be paid in respect of children absent owing to an epidemic [39 and 40 Vic. c. 79, s. 17]	3 April	One month
Court of Session (Scotland) Sheriff Courts (Scotland) Act, 1876,—Copy of Act of Sederunt anent regulating the places in counties in Scotland at which commissary business shall be conducted [39 and 40 Vic. c. 70, s. 54]	8 April	36 days

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TO THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[AUTHORISED EDITION].

THIRD VOLUME OF SESSION 1903.

MARCH 24—*APRIL* 8.

EXPLANATION OF ARRANGEMENT AND ABBREVIATIONS.

Bills: Read First, Second, or Third Time = 1R., 2R., 3R. [*c.*] = Commons. [*l.*] = Lords. *Amendt.* = Amendment. *Os.* = Observations. *Qs.* = Questions. *As.* = Answers. *Com.* = Committee. *Con.* = Consideration. Where in the Index * is added with Reading of a Bill, or a Vote in Committee of Supply, it indicates that no Debate took place on that Stage of the Bill, or on that Vote. Subjects discussed in Committee of Supply are entered under their headings, and also under Members' Names, without reference to the actual Vote before the Committee.

Abraham, Mr. W. [Cork Co., N.E.]

Murphy, James—Case of, Action of Commissioners of Charitable Donations and Bequests with regard to Sum bequeathed by — Powerlessness of Government over Commissioners' Action, *Apr. 2*, 901.

Accidents

Non-Fatal Industrial Accidents—Discontinuance of Publication in "Labour Gazette" of Monthly Statement, owing to misleading nature of Statistics.
  Q. Mr. Bell; *A.* Mr. G. Balfour, *Mar. 26*, 294.

Shipyards—Number of Fatal and Non-Fatal Accidents occurring in, during 1902.
  Q. Mr. J. Wilson; *A.* Mr. Akers Douglas, *Apr. 2*, 896.

Acland-Hood, Mr.

Sale of Adulterated Butter Bill—Early Date for Second Reading of, proposed, *Mar. 24*, 64.

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